

## SHANE'S MEMORIAL GARDEN AT DDI: MAY 31,2013

I wanted to thank everyone who was a part in making this beautiful garden for our precious son Shane and his beautiful friend Sienna. I know Mike O'Connell was the person to come up w/ this idea and I want to thank you for that... Esther Gomez-Nieto has put so much of her time and efforts into getting this garden just perfect. The beautiful thoughts that went into everything as far as getting the perfect bench, statues, and the plaque did not go unnoticed... Meryl and all of the staff at DDI were all so helpful and so generous w/ their time in making this garden a success... And thank you to Jonathan and Lauren who donated their time to build this beautiful place for our children... We appreciate all of their hard efforts as well... We are forever grateful to all of you who had a part in this very generous gift that we will treasure forever...

Our son Shane started at DDI when he was two years old... Just barely crawling at the time, we put him on his little yellow bus and off he went to start his first day of school. I can still remember what he wore... As nervous as we were to put Shane on a bus and send him off to school at such a young age, there was also a calm feeling because we knew he was in such good hands... From the moment we looked at DDI and met the staff, we knew it was the right place for Shane. I can remember meeting Meryl, Joan and Sandy and leaving there w/ a sense of relief knowing this school was going to be where our son would learn how to walk, improve w/ feeding issues, maybe learn how to write one day... We had such high hopes for Shane because he was so bright and personable... People loved him... He was so pure and sweet and also very funny. I knew in his 2 and a half short years he spent at DDI, he would make an impact on all of his teachers and his friends. And he did... And the impact all of his teachers made in his life and our life will never be forgotten...

The time Shane spent at DDI in my mind, was one of his greatest accomplishments... He worked so hard every day... He put in a full days work at such a young age... Starting on his bus at 8:15 am every day and not returning home until 4:10 PM... He was tired when he arrived home. All he wanted to do every day after school was to take off his sneakers w/ his orthotics, and get comfy on his couch and watch some Yo Gabba Gabba, Mickey Mouse, Victorious or Big Time Rush. The hard work he put in along w/ the hard efforts made by his teachers paid off... We saw how Shane was improving and we were so happy... I loved going to his school for the parent training sessions and all of the meetings for Shane because I knew he was moving in the right direction and I enjoyed watching him learn and grow...

Because of all of these reasons, it all makes sense that this memorial garden was placed at DDI for our son Shane... There is no other place that it belongs... When I think of Shane, I think of DDI all of the time because he loved it there so much, just as I did... I still look for his little yellow bus every day at 4:10 pm... I know Shane is with us all today and loves what has been done for him and Sienna. DDI will always be a beautiful happy memory for Shane and all of our family.