

November 9, 2010

Honorable Carol Liu
Chair Senate Human Services Committee
1020 N Street, Room 521
Sacramento, CA 95814
Sent via email

Dear Senator Liu,

By way of this letter, my wife Elizabeth and I extend our appreciation and gratitude for your stellar career and efforts in serving our communities in addition to Chairing the Senate Human Services Committee.

The main focus of this letter is to share our personal story centered on our soon to be 4 year old Son Oscar Antonio. We would like to share from a parent's perspective as your committee moves forward with this important hearing.

While 3 months pregnant, we were informed that our child would be born with Down Syndrome. As our only child, the news turned our world upside down. We were clueless, unprepared and had no experience in dealing with this issue, much less what to expect. Our immediate impulse was to start researching everything we could on DS and what we may expect. We can honestly state it was a time of stress, uncertainty and were very heavy hearted. Unfortunately, our initial research did not provide the results or answers we were looking for. By chance we came across a site for the Family Resource Center at the West Side Regional Center in Culver City. This site had some answers and information with potential options. We quickly scheduled an appointment and met with department head, Elizabeth Spencer and for the first time in months we felt as there was hope and a way to manage and provide for our Son. We knew we still had a challenge ahead of us but with resources provided by the Lanterman Act through the WRC now we had a glimmer of hope.

Since that initial meeting our world has righted itself, we are Blessed with the most precious child parents could pray for and the support and direction of all the staff at WRC has been stellar. From day one, WRC's director Mike Danneker made it a point to meet us and has consistently kept an open door. We feel this is a team effort.

As the market needs change and grow so must the way services are provided. There is always room for improvement. The ability to timely disseminate information is important, to adequately share options and plans a must. We have been the recipients of a strong line of communication and as result Oscar Antonio has received the needed support that has made all the difference in the world. We have high hopes and expectations for our Son and know that without the help from everyone at the WRC it would have been virtually impossible to be where we are today. The professionalism and dedication from everyone at the center has made a huge difference for us.

Due to this positive impact my wife and I have gotten involved. We both attended an extensive Partners in Policy (PIP) course to better understand the system. I am a board member at the WRC and a board delegate to ARCA.

We are very grateful and appreciative for everything the WRC has done for our Son and trust that by sharing our story with you and the Committee it would reflect that the system is working and having the impact it is designed to make. We also trust and believe that through these efforts the system will improve and become more efficient and continue to make a difference one person at a time.

Respectfully,

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