

6-22-18

Over the past few weeks I have been ignoring signs that I knew were there. I was hoping I was being over sensitive and that its ok for Clay to have bad days too. I was hesitant to go to the lake and start our summer season where we stay at the lake house from Thursday through Sunday. I had a gut feeling that I wasn't ready or now I know my gut was telling me Clay wasn't ready. I asked him if he wanted to go to the lake and he said yes so I started preparing as I normally do. We were at the lake for a few hours when Clay went outside to the path and rolled a huge rock down the hill towards the dock and the boat. I told him no and he became very agitated. I told Zach I would handle it and to stay down at the dock with Wes. Clay continued to amp up and threw a rock towards the cars and then went in the house and kicked the garbage can as hard as he could across the house. I took him upstairs and physically made him stay on his bed so he couldn't continue to break things. I gave him some of his medication to help calm him and it didn't do anything. I just contained him to his bed and told him to calm down. As I was trying to physically restrain him I started to think in my head "I can't do this anymore, I'm done." After Clay fell asleep I told Zach that I don't think I can spend the summer with him and we started talking about medication changes and tried to reassure ourselves we would get it figured out.

The next morning Zach went off to work and Clay slept most of the morning. I thought to myself "today is a new day, it's going to be ok". Wes and I spent the morning playing on the dock with the dogs and I devoted every second of peace to Wes and we had a great time. When Clay woke up I gave him some food and he was pretty calm for about an hour. I was trying hard to prove to myself and Zach that it would be a good day and I could handle Clay's issues like I have in the past. Clay decided that he was going to be mad about the fact that his video wasn't loading fast enough on his ipad and started to get really mad. I had a bad feeling that I was about to be in a situation I couldn't control and I told Wes to go up to the shop on the four wheeler and stay there with his phone. Clay snapped like I have never seen him before and he threw his ipad across the room and shattered it. My first thought was I had to get him out of the house because he will break all the windows and destroy our house. I ran out the door and threw the dogs in the car as I was fearful Clay would hurt them in his rage. I used all my strength (adrenaline) and body weight to physically push him out the door and lock it so he couldn't get back inside. I then ran to my car and started to drive up the driveway with Clay trying to break the window to get in. He was still very angry but also scared and wanted to get in the car. My instinct told me to not let him in my car for fear he would hurt me while I was driving, break the windows, and hurt Wes and the dogs. By this time Wes sees me driving with Clay running behind me screaming like a scene out of a horror movie. I called Zach and told him to call 911 to have the cops come help me

transport Clay to the ER. By this time Wes had called Zach too in a plead for help for me. Wes quickly got into the car and we drove slowly away while Clay ran behind us screaming. Zach by this time was racing down to the lake from work to help me. The police called and through my manic screams I explained where Clay was and that I was blocking cars from being near Clay (luckily we live on a quiet road on the lake) and they were on the way to help. Clay ran for about a mile and a half and Zach was able to get there faster than the cops and Clay jumped in the car with Zach and he took him to the ER. I stayed back with Wes and the dogs to talk to the police and file a report.

On our way to town Wes held my hand and told me it was going to be ok. He is an amazing 11 year old and I tried to reassure him that it will be ok. I dropped Wes off at home with his grandpa and met Zach in the ER with Clay. Clay was calm by the time I arrived at the ER and we talked to the psychiatrist on call and all agreed Clay needed to be admitted into Pathways, which is an inpatient treatment center. I went over to Pathways and started the admission paperwork while Zach stayed with Clay while they transferred him to Pathways from the ER. Clearly Clay needs his medications to be reevaluated in a safe, controlled environment and that is where he is now. I have a sense of peace knowing he is safe, and they are figuring out his medication. I couldn't go visit him today because my mind told me I wasn't ready. Zach said he was comfortable and calm when he went to see him and that helped me relax.

Zach and I had a long talk and we decided we are going to move forward in starting the process of getting Clay into a group home. We do not enter this decision lightly but we know that Clay is changing into an adult and he needs different care than we can provide at home. Selfishly, I want Wes to have a normal home where he doesn't have to watch his mom and dad try to keep Clay from throwing a tantrum.

As we enter into this next phase of parenting I know the road will not be easy. Zach is an amazing husband and father, he and I support and lift each other up through these hard times. We will encounter many road blocks on getting Clay into a group home and we are prepared to preserve and work hard for answers. There are not many options for group homes for teenagers with disabilities in Kalispell, so we are prepared to pioneer the way for Clay and others like him in our community. We will happily accept any help others have with experience in setting up nonprofits or other group home experience.