SECAC

4/6/2019

8:30am

**Keynote Speaker**

**Life**

**Presented by: Walter Suskind**

-Documentary-Path Walter walked with Owen, his brother with Autism

-It’s a path because all families are walking one

-Each path is unique and some are so much the same

-Siblings worry about the future of the sibling and there is a fear of discussing it with parents

-As a child, play dates are different

-Disney movies were their bonding time where they ‘dug in’ and connected

-Owen memorized every Disney movie

-Whole family talked in Disney dialogue but only within the 4 walls of their house so they could relate to Owen. However, they didn’t know how to bring it into the real world.

-To protect Owen, Walter didn’t want him around because he didn’t know what to say to others

-Looking back he would have acted differently

-In elementary and middle school, Walter felt like he was walking on eggshells

-When Owen graduated from high school, Walter saw so much joy and happiness in Owen

-Some never expected him to graduate

-Parents said to Walter, ‘live your life, Owen will be okay’

-Didn’t always want to tell his parents he was frustrated

-We are the generation to walk forward for our siblings with disabilities

-Wants Owen to get out in the world and be as independent as possible

-Path may be hard but parents taught him to be fierce and have appreciation