

Participant Directed Services

Family and Participant
Testimonials for the Participant
Directed Services Model

CAMERON & JJ

“The Boys That Make Noise”

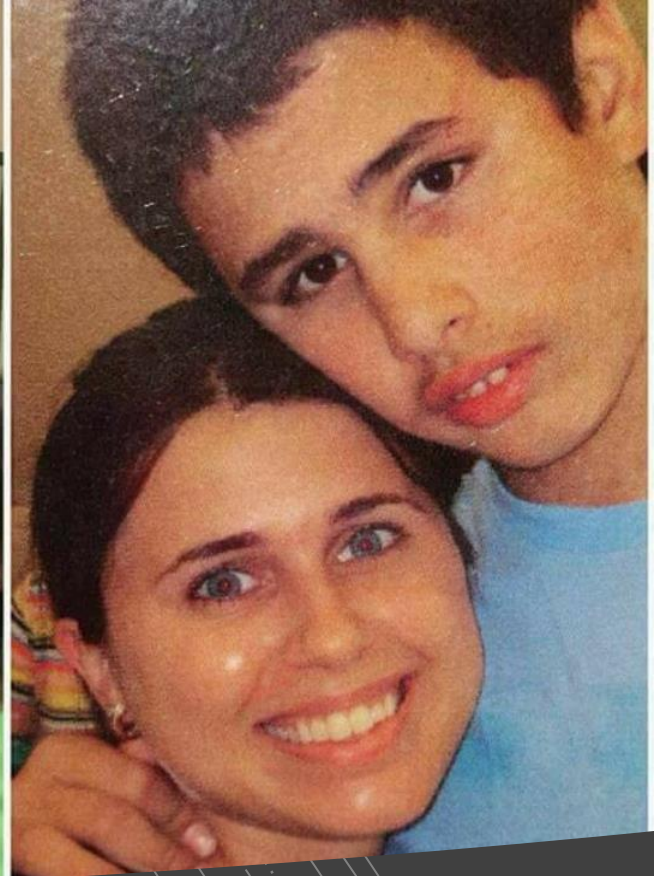
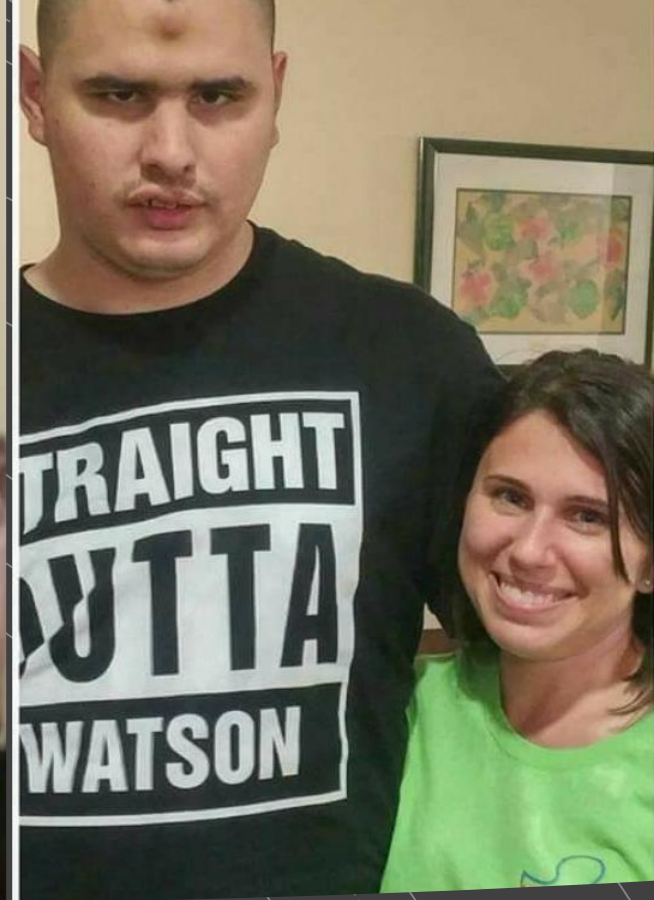




Where to begin? At the end, obviously...

- For just a bit of context of how these young men and their families came to deciding Person Directed Services (PDS) is the best choice for them, we need to also provide a bit of a backstory.
- Cameron (seen here) graduated at the age of 21 in 2015
- JJ also graduated at the age 21 just one year later in 2016
- They were at the end of their school age years





After 18 years of being in school full- time with...



In school PT, OT, Speech and Language Therapies

In classroom Behavioral Specialist

Social workers, lunch ladies, office staff and even the maintenance Men all added to the support to not just these boys but all the students.

And...the teachers...OOOOHHHH THE TEACHERS!
Microsoft does not make enough power point slides to present and praise these teachers in the light they deserve!!

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Secondary Transition

Pretty confident no explanation is required for this part...every parent and caregiver with a Special Needs child age 14yrs and older KNOWS the term and has been through the process. Not necessarily a fun process but most certainly an important one.



Of course, it was important to us... We were planning for Cameron and JJ's futures and what their day to day lives were to become once school ended.



WHAT HAPPENED?

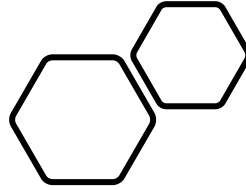


A LOT HAPPENED!!

Somewhere between the start of Cameron and JJ's Secondary Transition and their final year of school everything changed. Policies, laws, procedures all changed.



Please don't misunderstand me...



The changes that came about have proven in part to have been, for many adults with disabilities across the country and in the counties across our Commonwealth, nothing but good, positive, and even empowering.

The hard-fought advocacy and the work it took to bring about these policy changes and laws should be applauded. Many lives and the quality of those lives have been much improved because of that work and it should be celebrated.



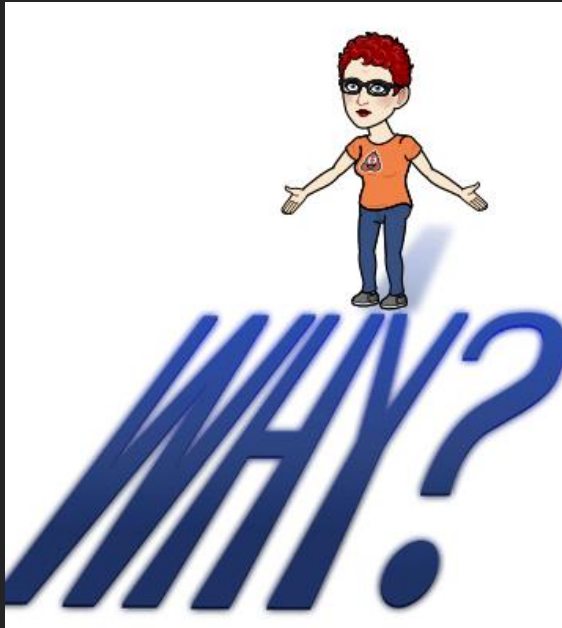
BUT...

With that being said...

The view from where our two families were sitting, more importantly and specifically Cameron and JJ, our perspective of those same changes were not (still are not) nearly as rosy nor feel remotely celebratory.

All of the plans that were in full on forward motion for both Cameron and JJ came to a screeching halt. For sake of brevity, I'll skip the play by play, but it goes without saying those same exact laws and policies that brought more choice and options to many, all but eliminated the choices and options not just for Cameron and JJ but all of "The Boys That Make Noise." POOF and just like that the goal driven, hard worked for viable options that held such promise for our boys, not all that long ago, had become completely unrealistic.





Well...because policy change is policy change...

Adult Day Programs had to change to comply which now meant they do not have room for the severe behaviorally complex

Traditional Provider Services had to change to comply which means they do not have the staff for the severe behaviorally complex

The structure of all federally and state funded programming had to change to comply with new policies and laws which leaves many not knowing even how to service the severe behaviorally complex



**“The Boys That
Make Noise” were
now,
GRADUATES...**

Who would have known that there would
literally be no adult services available for
Cameron or JJ after graduation?

We didn't.





**The Boys That
Make Noise
were to now
be home 24/7**

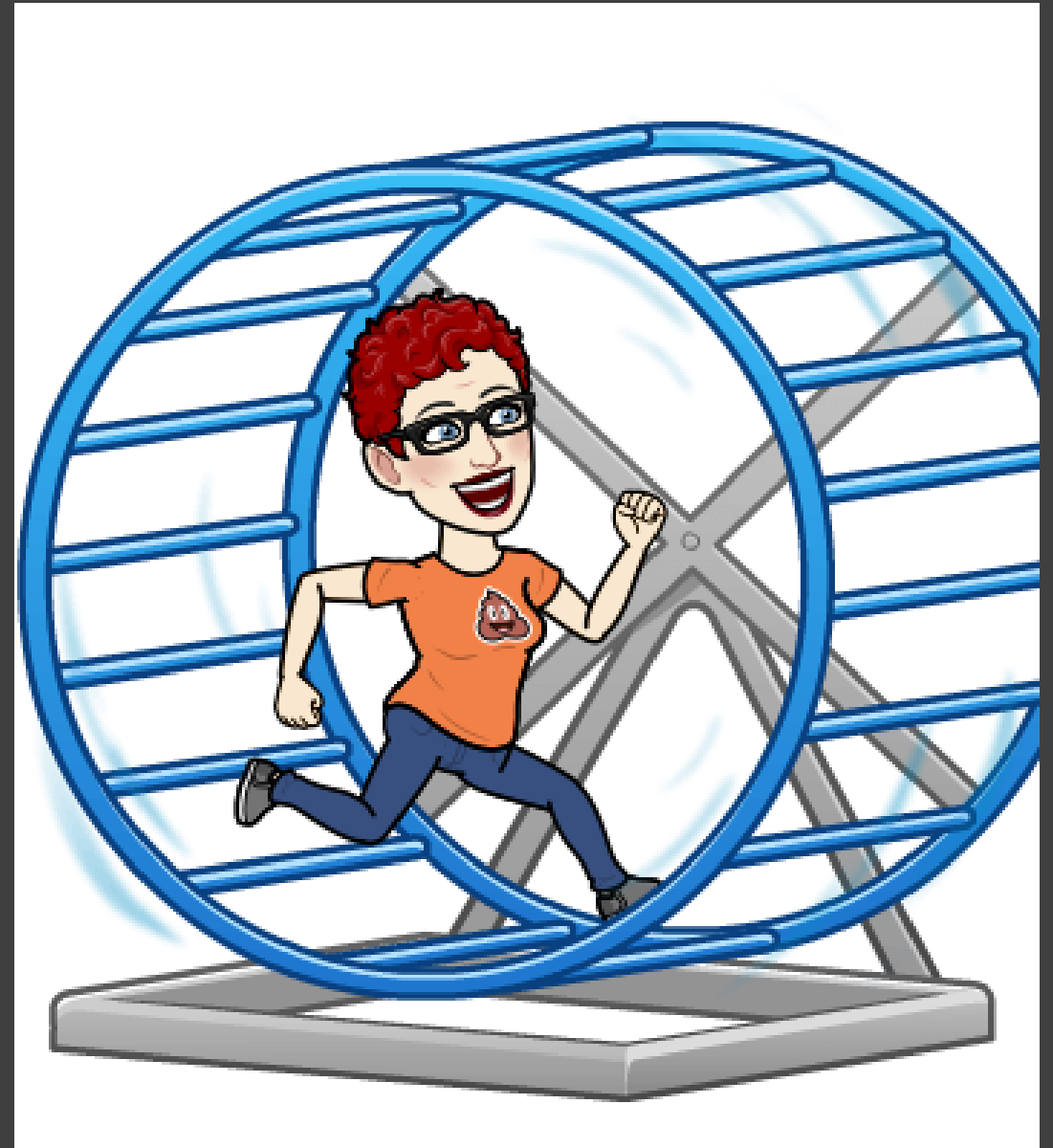


Please, keep your arms and legs inside the car at all times...

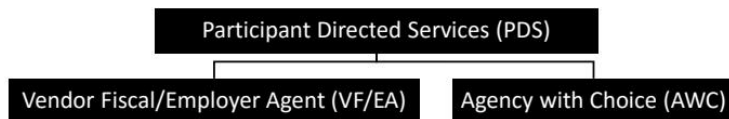
The Boy JJ being home 39hrs a day 12 days a week...this wasn't going to be anything I wasn't used to. After all, 18yrs of the vicious cycle of "bus aide hasn't shown up in 3days which means no school for JJ those 3 days which means no going to work for me for the 3rd day in a row which means I got fired YET AGAIN which means missing pay which means bills not paid and on and on and on...oh wait...they found a new aide OH YAY oohhh...wait...not so fast...what...new aide quit after 1 day because she couldn't handle JJ behaviors which were a direct effect of him missing so much school."

One year JJ missed 73 days of school. I lost 18 jobs in the course of 2 school years. Having had that experience more times than I care to count HOW could I even attempt to trust a Traditional Service Model for his HAB services? I couldn't, especially with new policies in place.

After a conversation with a fellow Mom... Cameron's Mom, I learned of PDS.



Financial Management Services Models



Once a person decides to use participant directed services, he or she will need to choose the Financial Management Service (FMS) model used to employ SSPs. The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) offers two options: Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent (VF/EA) or Agency with Choice (AWC).

There are differences between the two models and it is important that people choose the one that will best meet his/her needs. The following table describes some of the differences between the two FMS models.

Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent (VF/EA)	Agency with Choice (AWC)
The person or their surrogate is the Common Law Employer (CLE)	The person or their surrogate is the Managing Employer (ME) . FMS is legal employer for human resources and payroll.
The CLE is responsible for recruiting, interviewing, hiring and firing the SSP and ensure the SSP meets provider qualification criteria.	The ME can refer prospective SSP to FMS or select SSP referred to the ME by FMS. The person and FMS are joint-employers
FMS runs criminal clearances.	FMS sees that SSP meets provider qualification criteria.
The CLE approves, signs and submits timesheets to the FMS.	FMS verifies and processes SSP timesheets and invoices the ME submits.
The CLE develops the employee job descriptions and responsibilities in line with the ISP and keeps SSP files.	FMS develops FMS-related SSP duties and the ME develops participant-specific SSP duties in line with the ISP.
The CLE provides training to employees.	The ME and FMS jointly provide SSP training as agreed by the ME and the AWC.
The CLE develops work schedules and back-up plans for SSPs.	The ME can request FMS to assist with developing work schedules and back-up plans for SSP
FMS handles SSP paychecks and taxes, insurances.	FMS handles SSP paychecks and taxes, insurances.
The CLE may dismiss SSP if necessary.	The ME may notify FMS of desire to dismiss SSP from the home.

This publication is supported by a grant from the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council.



Participant Directed Services

You either have or will be given a presentation for both
Financial Management Services Models during this
“Lunch And Learn”
Agency With Choice (AWC)
and
Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent (VF/EA)

Whether you are a Participant, Parent, SC, Transition Specialist this will be a lot of information to take in but no worries...THIS is what The Regional Resource Council is for...for help navigating what can seem complicated and an overwhelming choice and process.
Anyone with waiver can participate in PDS.
Print out of these two different models can be found at

www.temple.edu/instituteondisabilities/pds

PARTICIPANT DIRECTED SERVICES IN PENNSYLVANIA

Leading a Self-Determined Community Life

Participant Directed Services Overview

Aligning with principles of self-determination, Participant Directed Services (PDS) provide a model whereby people with disabilities have more control over where, when, how, and who provides their supports. Participant directed services help people with disabilities:

- Increase their freedom and autonomy
- Enhance self-advocacy
- Access supports that best matches their needs and preferences
- Have increased authority of services and supports
- Take responsibility for the services receive

With participant direction, people who live in their own home or the home of a family member or friend are able to hire their own Support Service Professionals (SSP) and conduct many of the employer responsibilities related to this. The person may opt to take the lead with these tasks or select a surrogate to act on his/her behalf.

"Self-direction works when individuals have clear and understandable information, opportunities to exercise choice, and assistance with making decisions when needed. Self-direction is only possible when family, friends, and people who provide supports respect the individual's preferences and their right to make mistakes and facilitate the implementation of the individual's decisions."

Supports Brokers

People with disabilities and families do not have to be on their own when it comes to participant-direction. People may choose to hire a Supports Broker to provide assistance enhancing natural supports, employer-related responsibilities, and following program requirements. Supports Coordinators will have a list of approved supports brokerage agencies in your county or you may opt to hire your own independent broker¹.

Supports Brokers work collaboratively with the person, family, Supports Coordinator, and service team and may help with:

- Recruiting, hiring, scheduling and supervising SSPs
- Enhancing personal and communication skills and service plans
- Expanding and coordinating informal, unpaid resources and supports
- Fulfilling Medicaid Managed Care requirements
- Completing required paperwork
- Keeping track of PDS expenditures
- Facilitating a Circle of Support
- Developing and maintaining back-up plans

A good Supports Broker is EVERYTHING

This point I can not stress enough. A well-versed and highly knowledgeable Supports Broker is half the battle in navigating PDS regardless of the model you were to choose.

This print out of the Overview of PDS and Support Brokers also available at

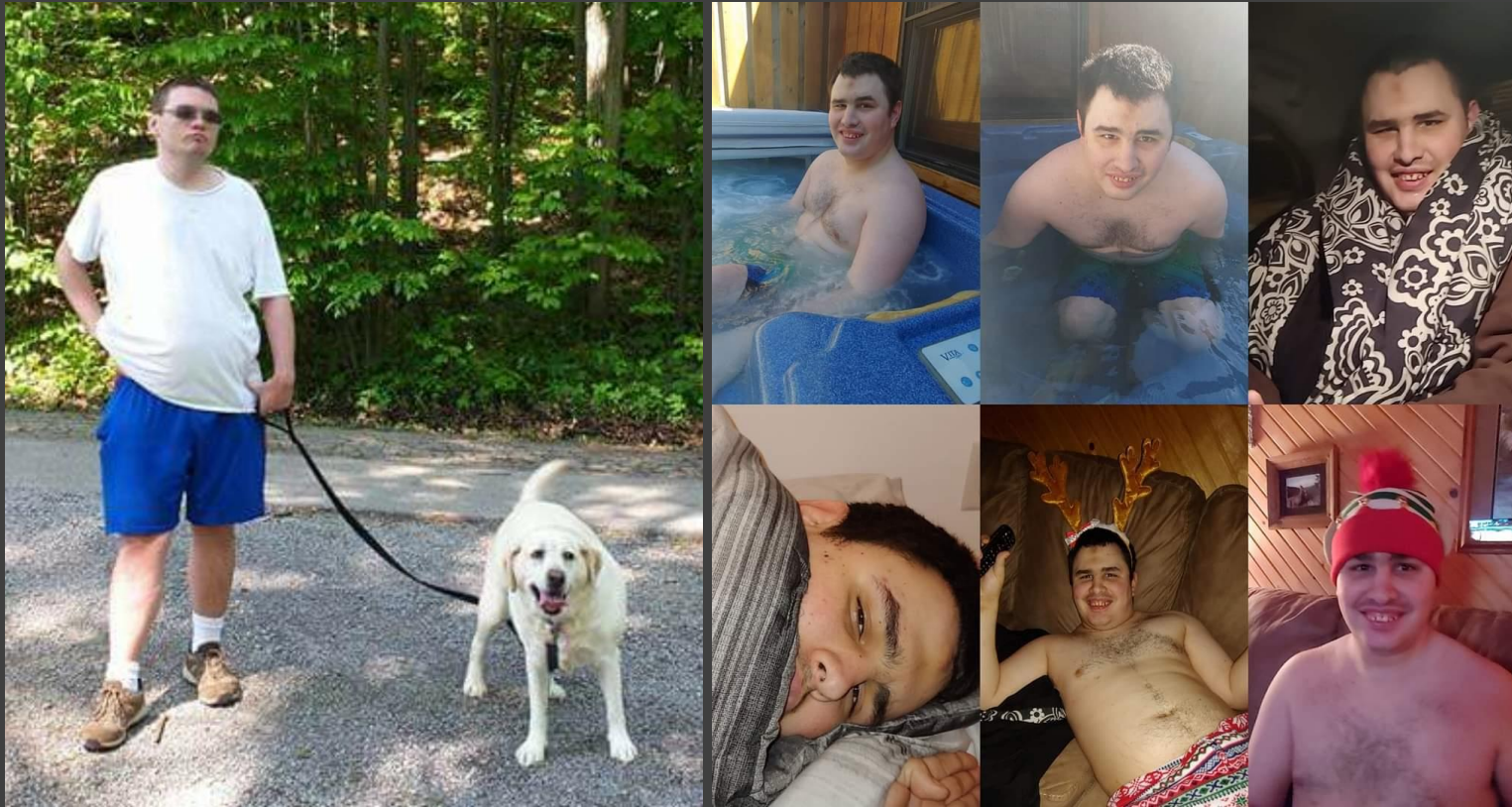
www.temple.edu/instituteondisabilities/pds



**Now...
Back to
The Boys**

Both Cameron and JJ participate in the Vendor Fiscal Model of PDS. Due to both young men being severe in their behaviorally complex needs it is the best choice for each of them and their families.

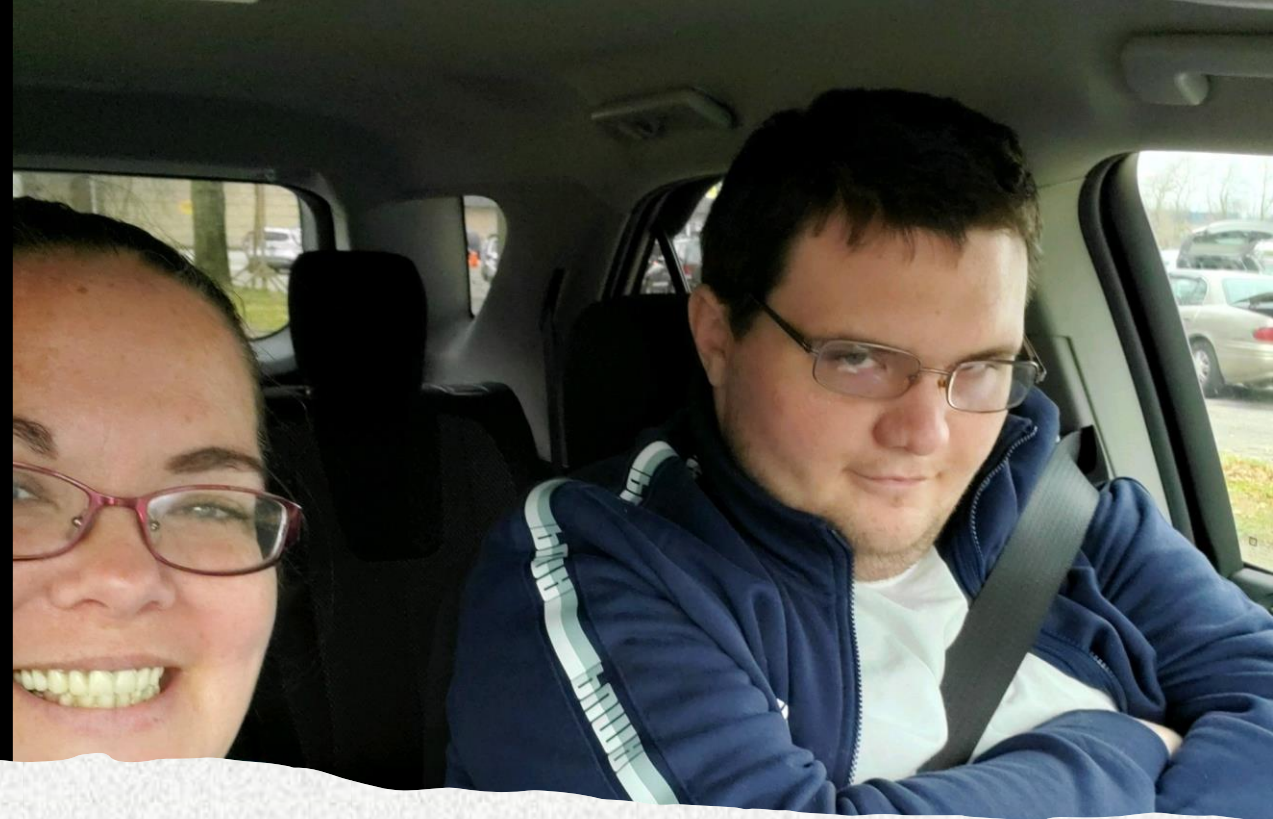




**Which ever
model you
choose you is
up to you of
course.**

**CHOICE is what
this PDS is
supposed to be
all about, after
all.**

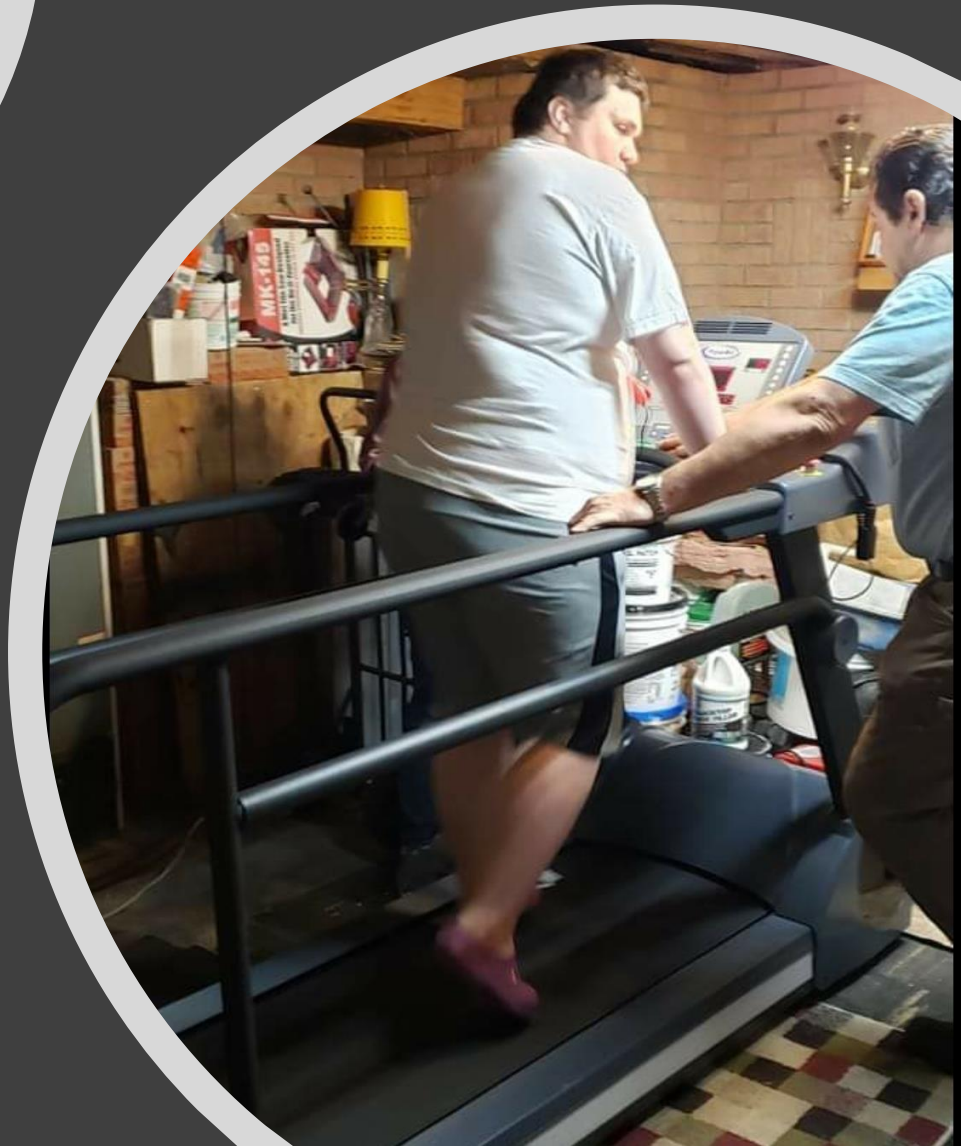




After exploring Agency With Choice and feeling that model was not going to suit Cameron's needs Beth chose Vendor Fiscal and became Cameron's surrogate Common Law Employer (CLE)



Beth said she feels she has more control over Cameron's staffing and services with PALCO. Furthermore, upon realizing that the amount of paperwork and responsibility she was going to have was no greater than it was being a Managing Employer with AWC Beth made the switch to VF/EA



Beth feels she has a better handle as Cameron's CLE on necessary services for her son such as Adaptive Equipment and Specialized Supplies as well



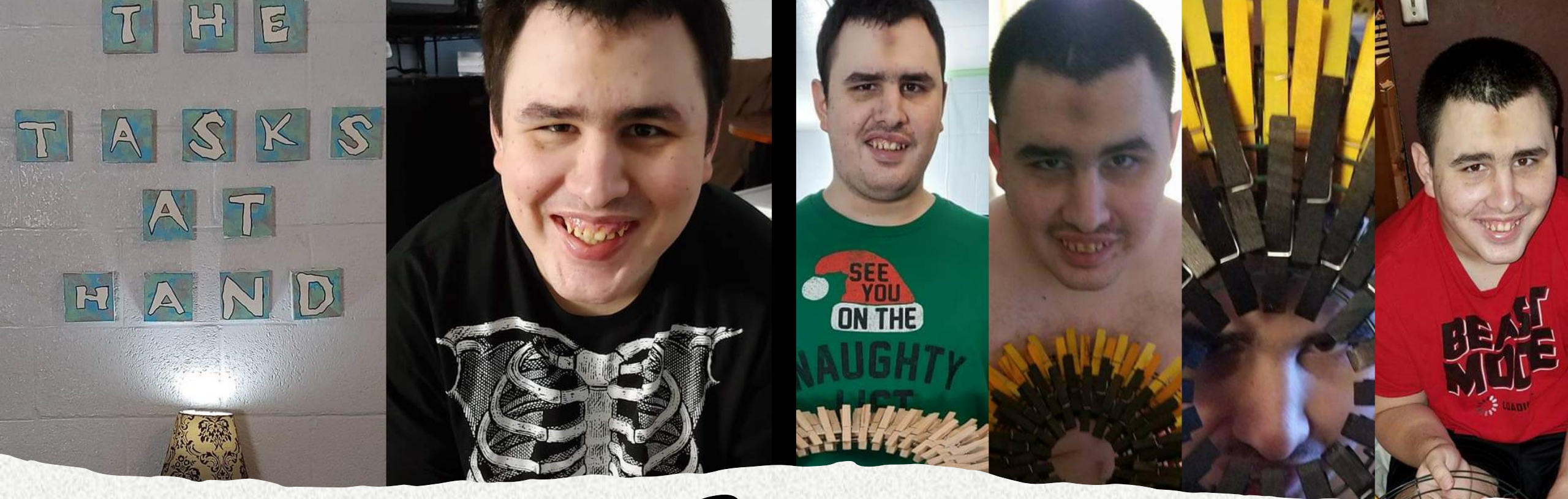
There Isn't Always Power In Numbers

JJ comes from a large family but that doesn't mean that any kind of meaningful physical support is automatically standing by at the ready.

We are so very fortunate however to have outstanding supports by way of a former Therapeutic Staff Supports who willingly stepped in to be JJ's surrogate CLE. As she knows "All things JJ" she resumed her old unofficial position of "She Who Makes It All Better"

When we first began this PDS process in late 2016, I was not aware of Agency With Choice. I became aware of it in 2018, I did not see any benefits in switching JJ from VF model to AWC model





With having the CLE locked down I was free to be my JJ's HAB staff. Although we were back to my Lad and I being together 24/7 at least my little family wasn't financially drowning. With me being his HAB I don't have to worry about call offs and no shows. I am on the clock for him and not just figuratively.

All parents must think outside of the box for their children...difference is most children grow up and move onto lives of their own. To be able to sustain this life thinking outside of the box becomes a saving grace.

Since no day program will accept my Lad, I made him his is own makeshift day program. All the skills he learned practiced and mastered all those years in school were going to waste or at best under utilized. He is active and productive. He had made wreaths out of clothespins. He has raised money selling them for fundraisers for 'Pets For Patriots" JJ works well, works hard and my Lad SHINES!!

One of the bullet points in the "Everyday Lives, My Life My Way" speaks to Employment and Meaningful Contribution. Although I believe that specific point really missed the mark for individuals that are significantly behaviorally complex, we thought outside of the box, flipped that box around, stood on top of it and made it fit my Lad. None of which would be possible without Participant Directed Services.





VF/EA Flexibility of Scheduling
Both CLEs as well as the families
for Cameron and JJ agree that
they rather like the flexibility and
independence of not having to
have a set schedule for their SSPs
work dates and times



For JJ we learned rather quickly that a set schedule for secondary SSPs simply does not work him. Not only that but as it was for SSPs in the past and most likely for future ones as well, working for JJ as his HAB is their 2nd job. When their day job already has demanding deadlines, mandatory meetings after hours etc. a set schedule can not, understandably, always be followed. Both VF/EA and AWC use Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) However for us being VF it is as easy as calling in from our home phone when SSP arrives and call again from home phone when their hours end. No logging into anywhere to change schedules before an SSP can clock in. NO FUSS! No “extra” Just stay within the approved hours each day and you will not go wrong.



VF/EA Flexibility and Independence of setting hourly wages for employees...

With the VF/EA model how high a CLE can set the wages for their employees will no doubt depend on the Participant's budget from their waiver. Cameron and JJ are recipients of the Consolidated Waiver (and please don't say or think "They're lucky" Neither of these Lads were awarded Consolidated Waiver just because they're grand fellas)

For employees of Cameron and JJ their CLEs can pay HAB staff anywhere in the range of PA State Minimum Wage of \$7.25 per hour to the maximum cap allowed by ODP for HAB services which is \$21.65 per hour. Both CLEs pay the employees maximum cap for their hourly wage. Paying a lower wage to the HAB staff that we found, we chose, and we trained to work for Cameron and JJ then using a possible raise in the future as incentive seemed a little backward to us. Offering maximum wage from the start we found to be a far more rewarding incentive. This is a flexibility that is only offered with Vendor Fiscal Employer Agency.

Additionally, Beth found that offering top of the payrate for other services brought better quality of qualified staff for Cameron.



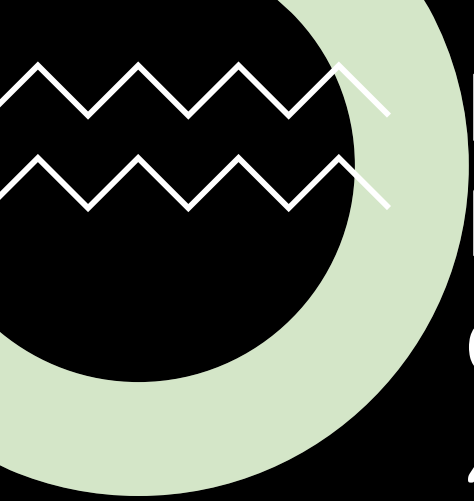


**Parents, SCs,
Caregivers, or even you
as the Individual,
please keep this in
mind...**

**Anyone interested in Participant
Directed Services for either
themselves or for their loved
one does not need to have
significant complex behaviors to
participate in PDS. Additionally,
please note complex needs
aren't even a prerequisite for
either AWC or VF/EA.**

**This is just our story...Cameron
and JJ's story. Our Boys That
Make Noise and why the VF/EA
option was the best fit for their
needs. We thought offering a
glimpse about the roadblocks
our boys and we as their family
encountered could be beneficial
to others when shared.**

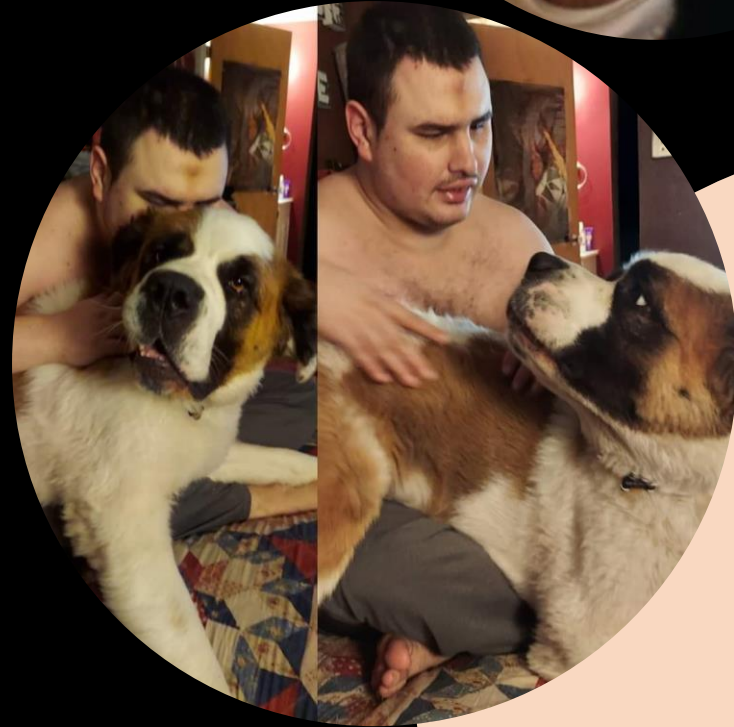




If The Boys Who Make Noise had a quote...

“How does one get ideas? By sheer perseverance to the point of madness. One must have the capacity to suffer anguish and sustain enthusiasm over a long period of time.” Charlie Chaplin

Of course, I don't know if Cameron or JJ would like it, but it reminds me of them and their individual genius!!



HOT DIGGITY



**ONLY 4
MORE
SLIDES
TO GO,
FOLKS!!**

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- Expanding and coordinating informal, unpaid resources and supports
- Completing required paperwork
- Keeping track of PDS expenditures
- Facilitating a Circle of Support
- Developing and maintaining back-up plans
- Enhancing person-centered planning and communicating modifications to the service plan
- Fulfilling Common Law Employer or Managing Employer responsibilities
- Problem-solving to help achieve outcomes
- Compliance with Waiver and PDS standards, regulations, and policies





I hope anyone considering Participant Directed Services really takes the time to see all the benefits it provides Individuals and their caregivers over the traditional Service Provider Model.

Yes...there is paperwork but there's always paperwork during the intake phase for any new service...right? Plus...you have help (ready...say it with me) SUPPORTS BROKER!!



And, as always...reach out

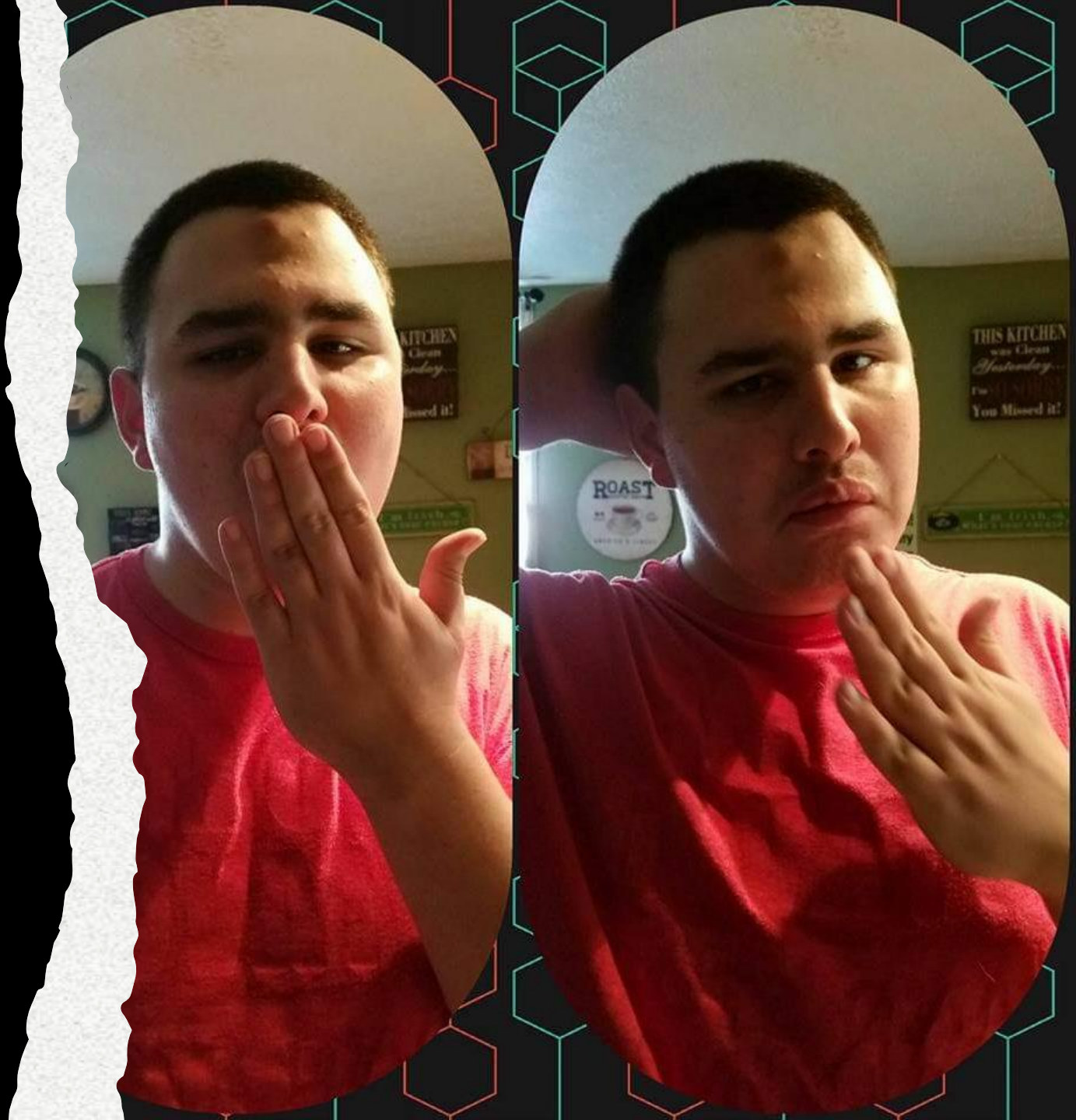
- If you don't know...ask
- If you don't like the answer... ask again
- If you STILL don't like the answer...ask someone else. There's nothing wrong with asking qualifying questions especially when there is new information coming out, being retracted, and being updated all the time.



**In closing, please
remember...
When you learn
something new
PASS IT ON!!
Best Wishes &
Good Luck!!**



THANK YOU



SUMMARY

- The following changes are made to your “Participant Directed Services” presentation:
- The slides are set to transition advance to the next slide as per the length of audio present over the slide. You can find more details [here](#).
- The speaker icon is set to hide when the slideshow plays. See the steps [here](#).
- Some audios contain a blank part and are trimmed to remove the blank part. See more about trimming audios [here](#).
- No other changes are made to the presentation.

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