

Words of Wisdom - Parent Leadership

1. *As a parent, what makes you take your personal story/experience and drive to improve systems and services for others?*
2. *Through my efforts as a parent leader, I have*

WoW Response 1

The reasons that I make time to share my journey is:

1. To help make the road easier for those who come after me.
2. To make things right.
3. To pay back or pay it forward for all that I have received for my boys.
4. Most importantly I do it for Devin and every child, parent and family member of the 1 in 150.

Through my efforts as a parent leader I have effected change!

Christine Buffington

WoW Response 2

As the parent of an adult daughter who has a severe to profound hearing loss, learning disabilities, and mental health issues, the thing that drives me to share my experience is the knowledge that everything that we have gone through to secure an appropriate education and services has not been in vain....that our knowledge can be used to better someone else's life, and make the road a little easier to travel.

As a leader, I serve as an advocate and a resource person for families who have children with special needs. I did this as part of the services of the Parent Information Project, ...at IUP.

I have also participated in (and served as co-director for) the Teacher Preparation Grant that was part of the coursework for students at IUP. I also co-taught a class in the Special Education department at IUP that provided students with strategies to include children with special needs, as well as strategies to work with parents of children with special needs.

Through my current work with the Early Intervention system, and as Director of Family Support programs through a non-profit social service agency, I am able to educate parents regarding deafness and special education, and will continue to advocate for children with special needs. I am now the grandparent of a grandson who has cerebral palsy, and as he transitions through the educational process, it has been necessary to help my daughter and son-in-law to advocate for him.

Laurie Filitske