Helping Families Make Progress

Peggy Shearer
Coordinator, Union County, PA Chapter

In this issue, we celebrate the success of a mother and her three sons who benefitted dramatically from the information in CHADD's publications and literature.

I am the mother of three sons with ADD. Prior to their diagnosis and treatment, my life was like "The Family Circus."

My oldest son, Nathan, was diagnosed in February, 1991 while in the second grade. I had never heard of ADD before but was greatly relieved to find out there was a reason for the difficulties he had been having in school. Nathan was never hyperactive. He was rather shy and withdrawn and had difficulty with starting, sticking to, and completing tasks. He earned good grades, but paperwork - especially homework - was a nightmare.

At that time, it was difficult to find information regarding ADD, especially for the inattentive type. As I read what information I could find about the disorder, it was more like reading about my son Michael, who was diagnosed later that spring. Michael was hyperactive and impulsive from the day he was born. He walked - or should I say ran - at eight months of age and hasn't stopped yet. I always knew that to tell him not to run was like telling him not to breathe!

It wasn't until about a year-and-a-half later that I learned about CHADD through Nathan's tutor. There wasn't a chapter in our area, but I joined anyway. I never regretted that decision. I gained more knowledge about ADD through CHADD publications than in any other way. As I learned, I believe I became a better parent. It was much easier to deal with Michael's hyperactivity and impulsivity when I realized that it wasn't my fault, and Nathan's temper tantrums, which seemed so inappropriate for his age, were less disturbing when I understood all of the frustrations he had each day. Even though we still had problems, the knowledge I gained from CHADD helped me to deal with my children more effectively. Yes, I still blew up at times when I was frustrated, but I learned to apologize, and it got better. I also learned the need for positive experiences in the lives of my sons because they faced so many negative ones every day.

My youngest son, Ryan, was diagnosed with ADD in 1993. I had been in denial until I spoke with his preschool teacher about school readiness. Again, I heard the same things I'd heard before. It was difficult to accept that he, too, had ADD.

Nathan is now in eighth grade, and for the first time since his diagnosis, has needed no "supports" to be successful in school. He has learned to take responsibility for his schoolwork, and he uses his homeroom period to study or do homework - something unheard of in the past. He is taking piano lessons and is a member of the chorus. Michael is in fifth grade and was on the honor roll the first, second, and third quarters. (In fact, he was on the high distinguished honor roll the first and third quarters!) He is actively involved in Little League and plans to play the drums next year. Ryan is in third grade and is also involved in Little League. He no longer takes medication. The structure in his classroom has helped him to succeed in school. Plans are being made to ensure that in fourth grade, he again will be in a structured classroom environment.

Our family has come a long way in the last six years. Thanks, CHADD, for being there!

Peggy Shearer
Coordinator, Union County, PA Chapter

Editor's Note: Thank you, Peggy for sharing your moving thoughts. Despite all of the time that Peggy's family and children demand, she still finds time to serve as a CHADD Chapter Coordinator, organizing meetings, arranging for local speakers, and, undoubtedly, spending countless hours giving advice and direction to other parents of children with ADD. Thank you, as well, for all of your hard work.