

# CAPITOL SCHOOL STUDENTS THEN & NOW

## James



### AT CAPITOL SCHOOL...2007

Throughout his life, James was such a loving, eager-to-please boy. Everyone loved James – teachers, friends, parents – he was so easy to get along with – except when he wasn't. At home, we had the controlling, ritualized daily tasks and the emotional melt downs that lasted sometimes for two hours. At day care, he walked around in wide circles in the classroom and never sat for circle time – he wasn't disruptive, but he didn't do what was expected of him.

We wanted some answers, so just before James turned four, we went to an OT, a developmental psychologist, a speech language pathologist, and a neurologist for assessments. We heard of sensory processing disorder for the first time; and language delay; and pervasive developmental disorder – and thank God – we heard about Capitol School from a friend whose son had attended the school.

After his three-day visit at Capitol School, he did not want to go anywhere else. Within the first full week of attending Capitol School, James had his first turn-taking conversation. James had “speech” all along, just no understanding of what anything meant. Ms. Karen and Capitol School met him right where he was and he finally began to understand that words have meaning. CSA gave us tools – tools for James' language development, tools for managing his sensory issues, and tools for getting our lives back.

Now, it's been a year since the first set of tests and diagnoses. James continues to learn and thrive in Ms. Niki's awesome Level 2 class. His annual tests show such amazing progress – but it's not the tests that tell us what a difference Capitol School has made. It's James' enthusiasm for understanding his world – “what happens if I fall up?”; “what happens if I have rockets on my shoes?”; “what happens if I lived on Mars?... It's James having friends that he cares enough about to both want them to come over and to banish them from his house because his feelings got hurt. It's him becoming articulate enough to disown me as his mother when he gets really mad. It's his ability to engage in play – even word play – with his little sister (now two). He is still much beloved by all who meet him. There is something wonderfully special about James that we all see – and we are increasingly able to access that special something with the loving support and highly professional intervention that come from being part of the CSA family. We are and will remain eternally grateful for this blessing.



### TODAY...

James is finishing up his first grade year with great success. Without the foundation of language and social development he received at Capitol School, he wouldn't be having this kind of success today. He's able to adapt to new situations, to communicate effectively with peers, to communicate very well with adults, and to follow classroom expectations (as much as any 7 year old boy can). He also has a passionate sense of social justice, for himself and for others. It's immeasurable what a foundation of language and communication skills, paired with loving kindness has done for this child.

He's excelling in math and reading, doing far more than other first graders - on his own. He is participating in afterschool programs that focus on science topics and scientific methods (laboratory techniques, measurements, experiments) and he's hooked. We've known he was science-oriented for a long time, but now he's in the zone. Watch out world, James is on the case of saving the environment!

