

# CAPITOL SCHOOL STUDENTS THEN & NOW

## Sam



### AT CAPITOL SCHOOL...1994

Because Sam was their first child, his parents, Tami and Rick had no basis for comparison and did not immediately recognize the seriousness of his developmental delays. At the age of twelve months, Sam could sit up and stand, but he could neither crawl nor walk. In addition to his motor skills problems, he did not speak any intelligible words and he often cried inconsolably. At his one-year check-up, the pediatrician said he might have muscular dystrophy and prepared them for the possibility that he might never walk and suggested he might be mentally retarded.

Tami and Rick were devastated. They arranged an immediate evaluation with the Dr. Karnik, who gave them hope. He indicated that Sam was delayed with very poor muscle tone, but saw no evidence of muscular dystrophy. He suggested Physical Therapy, which Sam screamed throughout each session and finally Tami took on doing the exercises with Sam at home. Shortly after Sam turned two, his little brother was welcomed into the home. At this point, the family decided to try a Mothers Day out program. He cried every day, the entire time. He had such limited language that he could not communicate with the other children. It was then that the family realized that his language delay was as important as his physical delays. At their next appointment, Dr. Karnik recommended intensive speech therapy. He suggested an early childhood program through public schools or a new private program called Capitol Kids. Tami observed both programs and knew Capitol Kids was the place for Sam.

Sam began at Capitol Kids in the fall of 1992 at age 3. He was unable to communicate and cried frequently. He had difficulty making transitions between activities and became extremely upset by any variation in the schedule. His teacher, Miss Ellen, noted that although his language was slowly developing, he had problems with word retrieval. He would get stuck groping for a word and Ellen would give him a verbal cue. Although Miss Ellen always encourages him, she also respects his individual learning style and prepares him for an activity before they begin. At the end of his second year at Capitol Kids, his parents say there is no comparison between the fearful child who entered the program unable to speak and the happy, smiling boy who gets out of the car every morning eager to go to school.



### TODAY...

After his time at Capitol School, Sam entered Kindergarten at Eanes Elementary in the Eanes School District. He completed Middle School and High School at Westlake. He had his Language Arts and Math classes in a small group setting, but the remainder of his days were spent in regular education classes. He was even a member of the Westlake High School Band playing the trombone. After high school Sam began at Austin Community College. He continues to take 1-2 classes a semester. In addition to school, he works at the Capitol part time as a Senate Messenger for the Texas Senate. It is a job he has come to love and look forward to each day. In his spare time, he watches as much football and basketball as possible. If you need any football statistic...he is your man with the answer.

Sam is still unsure as to what career path he wants to pursue, but his family has no doubt he will continue to blossom into a fine young man.

