

Testimonials from Mothers of Children with Disabilities

María Beatriz

Son: Juan

Six years old

Diagnosed with Autism

Hi, my name is María Beatriz Marcos. I belong to Sacred Heart Parish in Washington, D.C. along with my son, Juan López, who is six years old.

At the age of two and a half years, my son was diagnosed with autism, something that scared me a lot. I am a single mother and currently we are experiencing a rather difficult time. The community has been an important support to me during this; we found a lot of help, a lot support from the community. It is good that we found support in the church, in the school, and in the people around us. It is important for people to understand somewhat the child with autism so they can understand and put themselves in the shoes of our children. Also it is important for you to know that as parents, we worry about finding resources to be able to help our children to overcome this and find a better future.

We have gotten a lot of help, a lot of support from the community, the school, the doctor, and right here in Sunday school; this has been very important. Right now Juan is in a phase where he is...we are starting new things and we are seeing progress. Sometimes it is difficult because with this disability that he has is a process which he takes small steps forward and suddenly there are setbacks. It is there when the parents need help from the people around us: help in the form of information, attention, affection for our children in the form of making a place for us and allowing us to get involved with all of you so that we feel that we are part of you, that we are not isolated from you, that you give us the opportunity to share with all of you.

Mothers of Children with Disabilities

Danubia

Daughter: Lisbeth

Diagnosed with Intellectual Disability

My name is Danubia Márquez. I have a daughter, Lisbeth Vázquez. I have two daughters. My first daughter, Lisbeth, has multiple disabilities. We are members of the community of the Sacred Heart. Thanks be to God we found support, because my daughter has a lot of disabilities. They have helped me a lot in learning little by little because... there are a lot of children that are different. When we say that we have a baby, little by little we realize that...and I don't know, ok, for me now, it is a blessing to have realized that she was disabled. We say, special, all of us are special without exception. In the community we find a lot of difficulties such as discrimination,

bullying...we see a lot of cases that sometimes the children don't understand. They think that, or maybe not, they try to find a way not to discriminate or bully them without realizing that they have a disability. We are, maybe... they don't realize it but it damages their self-esteem and hurts them. And this hurts us more, as their family, their parents, knowing that they cannot defend themselves.

But thank God we realized along the way that the person who is their voice is us, the parents. And thank God, in this community of the Sacred Heart we have found support. Outside of here there are many, many people that don't realize there are places like this. I feel, as a mother, I am my daughter's voice. I tell them to seek help, don't stay in; be a voice for your children. Although it may take a while, they are going to find support and strength in you. We parents are the source of strength for the children so that they can go on, even slowly. The children are going to learn and find support and help from us. In the future, they are going to make progress.

Our future is in our children. Thanks be to God there are a lot of special children but the same way I tell everyone, all of us are equal, all of us are special, even children with disabilities, not more or less. For me, it was very hard to realize that my daughter was one of those with difficulties; but seeking, I found help in this community, blessed be God. I pray and I ask them to support them and may it be God's will that God will bless them and that they will keep helping not only my child but also many more children.

I give you thanks, as I have said, little by little she is...she already made her first Communion. She is on her way. The teachers are very good. God bless them. God bless the community, may they keep helping us, blessed be God. On behalf of these children and on behalf of many more children; thank you.