



I am the parent of an adult son with autism, and it's meaningful to me that April is Autism Awareness Month. I appreciate this annual recognition of people who live with autism's challenges and rewards: adults and children with autism, parents, caregivers, teachers, therapists, friends and advocates.

As a mom, I can safely say that parents are on the front lines advocacy and inclusion for our children with autism. We serve as bridges between our children and those who find our kids socially awkward or remote. We take pains to help others understand with compassion just who and how our children are in the world. We are heartbroken and angry when our children are isolated or bullied by others because they are "different." We parents sometimes feel isolated and judged by others who live far outside of our experience.

And like every other parent, we find joy in our children's successes, interests, breakthroughs and self-awareness. We are gratified with the growing understanding of autism in its various forms, and with school programs that are more sophisticated and effective in educating children with autism.

No parent of an autistic child can go it alone. As one who has reached out for guidance and help, I encourage other parents like me to form a squadron of support: Friends and family, educators, support groups, state and local resources, and most important, with parents like us. There is nothing like a sympathetic parent – one who truly knows – who can offer the most hope, encouragement and understanding. We can create cocoons of understanding where no explanations are needed.

Some of the most valuable resources I have found over the years include the Asperger's Association of New England, Autism Speaks and Sensory Processing Disorder. In the Berkshires, families can find a number of support resources including:

- ♦ Berkshire County ARC <https://www.bcarc.org/>
- ♦ Berkshire Autism Connections <http://autismconnectionsma.org>
- ♦ Pediatric Development Center <http://pediatricdevelopmentcenter.org/>

As my son approached adulthood, we relied also on an educational advocate to help plan for his future as a more independent young man; this was an invaluable resource for us. For a time, I wrote a blog about raising a son with autism, and it can be found [here](#).

***In the middle of every
difficulty
lies opportunity
- Albert Einstein***

