

April, 2013

RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR WOBURN SCHOOL'S JOB TRAINING PROGRAM

Dear Foundation Trustees:

My name is Mary Pallazola and my son, Jon, presently attends the May Institute in Woburn. He is 15 years old and has been attending the school for three years. Jon has a diagnosis of autism, and as a parent of a child with a disability such as this, the areas we focus on change from year to year. As of now, we are thinking more and more about his future as an adult.

May Institute has always been a school we have strived to have Jon attend because it has programming for students with special needs to prepare for adult life. This focus is paramount, and a huge undertaking with a lot of uncertainty.

This past year, Jon has moved up to a classroom with peers in his age group and engaged in pre-vocational training. The May has a program at a conservation area and Jon has participated in cleaning, raking, and other maintenance tasks. He has also been travelling to McLaughlin House, an adult home in the area, and with help, has learned how to wash windows and clean surfaces there. He also has had training in more of an office setting, shredding paper, sorting items, and working on typing skills for data entry. All of these skills were taught by dedicated teachers at May Institute. They offer terrific support for their students and I am forever grateful for them.

However, these opportunities wouldn't be possible without the generosity of the community accepting kids like my son, Jon. Providing real life settings for these students to train is invaluable. Organizations like these show parents like us that the community is accepting, and more importantly, hopeful about the population of individuals with special needs. This is so comforting to know.

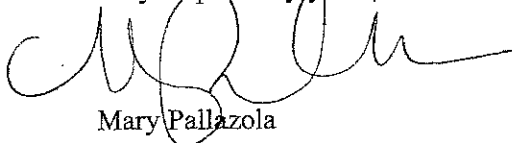
Jon will continue to work on his skills and learn new ones during his school days. I would like to see him improve on his computer skills because he seems to really enjoy this. He also greatly enjoys getting out in the community and participating in real "work." He gets great satisfaction in doing a job well and it is a huge confidence booster.

My hope is that when Jon has graduated from the May Institute, he has a job to go to and will become a productive citizen in the community. He and all of his fellow students deserve this opportunity.

I am extremely hopeful that there will be more and new vocational training opportunities in the community for our children. A varied setting for them to visit can only help them learn more and improve their skills. The staff at May Institute work very hard to teach these skills in the classroom, but to really put them to work in an actual place of business is essential.

Without the prevocational training services that start in the classroom and carry out in the community, the futures of kids like Jon could be one of much dependency. I think that with the proper training, these students can absolutely contribute to society by not only working, but by becoming more independent and developing relationships to enrich their own lives in their years to come.

Very respectfully yours,



Mary Pallazola