

December 1, 2017

What do the holidays mean to you?

While many enjoy the shopping, baking, and brightly wrapped gifts, the festive gatherings with friends, and the moments of quiet reflection on the past year, for most of us the answer to this question revolves around two things: home and family.

It is no different for our residents at Matheny.

James is a 24-year-old resident at our main campus who has called Matheny home since he was ten years old. His mom, Cathy, recounts the day James moved into Matheny as one of the hardest days of her life. As a single mother to James and his sister, she struggled to deliver the 24-hour, 7 day a week care James required while raising her daughter and working full time to provide for her family. James had been attending school at Matheny as a day student for a few years, so she knew it was a special place. After she toured the residential health care facility, she also realized it was the answer to her family's needs, and to her prayers. Cathy feels grateful to live near Matheny, which she regards as one of the best facilities of its kind in the country. "It is the hardest decision you will ever make, to move your child into a residential health care facility, but Matheny has become his home."

Over the years James has grown and thrived at Matheny. Today, he is a gregarious young man with diverse interests and a beaming smile. On a given day he can be found listening to country music during his physical therapy sessions, or strumming a guitar as he belts out "*Born to be Wild*". He also loves to dance, and is an enthusiastic participant in the dance program at Matheny's award-winning Arts Access program.



James at Christmas, with his mother and sister.



Recently through Matheny's Community Connections program, which enables residents to experience a variety of recreational opportunities, James has resurrected a past interest in hippotherapy. "He just loves it," says Cathy, who marveled at a photo of her son on horseback. "Though James has trouble sitting up straight on a bench, the moment he got up on that horse he sat up perfectly straight." Soon after, James began to sign the word 'horse', something he hadn't done since the first time he participated in the activity, to express his joy. He also delights in outings to movies, dinners, and the adult day care center in Hillsborough with his fellow residents.

James also enjoys the camaraderie he experiences at Matheny, with not only his peers but his caregivers as well. "Michelle, James' Personal Care Assistant, is wonderful," says Cathy, "the best caregiver I can think of." Cathy says that Michelle, who is with James daily, does

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James with his family visiting outside Matheny

(over)

a wonderful job of communicating with James, who can get frustrated when people are unable to understand him. She also knows when he is tired or needs a change of pace. James is also a fan of Cindy, the head of therapy. Says Cathy simply, "They know him."

Whether he is receiving a teeth cleaning at the Center for Medicine and Dentistry or an adjustment to his wheel chair by Matheny's Wheel Chair Clinic, Cathy has never felt her son was receiving anything less than stellar care by a loving and attentive staff. "You will encounter the most caring people in that building," she says. "At the end of the day, the staff are our extended family."

As for James, Cathy knows he feels Matheny is home. When she comes to visit he takes pride in excitedly showing her any holiday decorations that have gone up overnight, or what new art is gracing the walls. He has had the same roommate for 14 years and the two are 'like brothers', often enjoying hang outs with the other residents, watching football or soccer.

During the holidays at Matheny, "When the tree goes up, James considers it his tree, and we open our gifts under it," says Cathy, who will do just that at the end of the month with James and his sister with whom he is very close.



James enjoys the Matheny Prom

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Home and family. This is the heart of the holidays and the heart of Matheny, for James and his family and all the residents, patients, and students who are served here by our caring, compassionate staff. As 2017 comes to a close, we ask you to consider a donation to Matheny so we can continue to provide the care, education, and programs tailored to the individual needs of each person we serve. It is the kindness and generosity of people like you that makes this possible, and for that we are grateful.

On behalf of everyone at Matheny, thank you, and may you and your loved ones have a happy, healthy holiday season.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K Sprott, MD, JD".

Kendell R. Sprott, MD, JD
President and CEO

Scenes of summer fun.

