



## Happy Belated Mother's Day!



## Excuse the Delay

I'm late, I'm late, for a very important date! No time to say Hello-Goodbye- I'm late, I'm late, I'm late.

So I had an amazing month of celebrations. Literally an entire month of giving love and light to "NOT SO Little PEOPLE" I have known since birth. My husband and I are only children and our friends are our extended family. We have decades of friendship with these beautiful souls and it was so incredibly special to share their day with them. Our nephew, Christian Benson graduated from Miami Law, our niece Sekai Parker graduated from Spelman College, our godson, Wendell Campbell graduated from Midtown Academy High-school. It was quite a whirlwind and it got me thinking about the importance of young mentors.



You see our daughter had challenges like most people on the spectrum making meaningful bonds. When other children had circles of friends come to the house, our daughter struggled in that area. Our extended family's children were her peers. Christian was her big brother, Sekai was an additional big sister and Wendell was her bestie! These extended family members were just a small part of the village but they made an impact!

Parents of children on the spectrum struggle mentally as they watch their children try to fit in. Turns out data supports this uncomfortable truth....



### The Impact of Autism on the Family

*by Jeanne Beard*

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We were blessed. There were so many people who stepped up and who did not have to. BUT-It was an act of LOVE for these young folks to always be kind and patient and interested and supportive. My husband and I were grateful to celebrate these rockstars and so many more! So Excuse me for the delay!

**Let's Give Them Something To TALK About!**

My older daughter, Jordan Chloe Jackson is a

ROCKSTAR! She is beyond intelligent, creativity oozes from her and she brings light and love wherever she goes. By her own standards she is simply Hysterical and not your average bear!

This week she hit an incredible milestone in her journey to become a professor. She passed her written and oral exams and is “ABD” ALL BUT DISSERTATION or as my aunt would say- Doing her thang!

I cannot tell you how it felt when my daughter shared she PASSED! I screamed inside and out because I know this daughter is a survivor and has a lot to say to this world! She had something to say as a toddler before she could form sentences well. I CANNOT wait to hear it all. Let’s give them something to talk about!



Recently our daughter on the spectrum asked if she has to be like Chloe and go to graduate school. Our response was- one step at a time. Keep watching your sister, A.K.A., Dr. Awesome and you will be just fine.

## Advocacy Never Ends

Our daughter recently finished her first year at SCAD. It was not perfect and that is the point right. She experienced the same highs and lows as most students.

- She had challenges with roommates and successfully lived with others
- She struggled in class and figured it out
- She dealt with professors who did not understand her
- She met a boy and broke up with one
- She was overwhelmed with finals but passed her final exams

I said it was a good month and it was- but Advocacy Never Ends. As our daughter becomes an adult there are so many additional challenges we must address. Most importantly-passing the torch to the extent she is able to navigate a complex world.

- How does she share her pain with physicians?
- How does she dispute a credit card charge?
- How does she deal with scam artists?
- How does she handle issues that come up at school or work?
- How does she explain the complexity of her disorder in milli-seconds when there is a misunderstanding?
- How does she protect herself in a world that may not “GET” her?



# "Parental Stress and Family Relationships During the Transition to Adulthood"

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I wish I had the answers but I do not. The best we can do for now is teach her how to engage with her communities the best way we can.

Having the strength to move forward and solve issues is a necessity when you engage with persons on the spectrum. They often have setbacks. Our philosophy however is setbacks are setups for success.

Giving the gift of grace for this population may change the trajectory of their lives.

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