



## Proud Aspy Mom Newsletter | February 2021

### Superpowers



So a friend sent me this article about a young man who was able to participate in the Super Bowl. Apparently he is the first autistic man that has been reported to participate in the Super Bowl and he had the opportunity to perform with “The Weekend.” What an outstanding opportunity for anyone. What struck me was that the young man indicated that he was the perfect person for this because his autism allows him to have superpowers. The reason why that struck me is because I say that to my daughter

all the time, literally, all the time. She has capabilities that most human beings I know do not have. She is resilient, she pays attention to detail, she hears way too much all at once and processes simultaneously, she articulates her thoughts in a stern and honest manner, and she’s able to dissect complicated content in a discernible way that most people cannot. In essence in some ways she is like a machine - quick to act and decisive in her mannerism.

The young man described his



“superpowers” similarly. As we expand our understanding of ASD we gain a greater understanding of where their strengths lie. It is not enough to embrace and applaud talent. It is important to accept their contribution and place in society.

As a parent I struggle with this concept. I know that there are areas where my daughter excels and where I see she may make a huge difference to the world, yet just because she has these strengths it does not mean she has the desire to work in those areas. It is important to listen to her voice and acknowledge her perspective. But for now I will keep my eye on her superpowers and try to activate them.

## Tribute to an icon- Dr. Patricia Ann Harvey



Last year my family and I lost an icon, my aunt Dr. Patricia Ann Harvey. My aunt was a fierce advocate of educational excellence and believed in the contributions of educators everywhere. Here are the 10 lessons she taught me which are applicable to every student- young, old or in-between

1. Know your worth
2. Live with Integrity and Character
3. Everyone has a Moral Compass
4. Listening is an Action Verb and requires your silence
5. Run your own race
6. Humility will take you farther than you know
7. Service is the price you pay to live and breathe on this earth
8. Find your joy
9. Prioritize your goals and write them down
10. Find your center of excellence



Her lessons reiterate why protective laws matter. I invite you to listen to her wisdom on [PBS 2000 season episode 114](#) and [PBS 2001 season episode 92](#)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, ("IDEA") was created to help all children with disabilities. The goal is to encourage special education and to address the individual child's needs. We commonly use the word FAPE, (Free and Appropriate Public Education) but I do not think we examine it. FAPE requires special services to support the needs of children. My daughter would have been lost without speech and occupational therapy as an added

accommodation. These services allowed her to thrive in an academic environment which did not impede her growth. The services also allowed her to thrive in a general education classroom, where she could learn peer appropriate interactions and engage with others.

I am treading water here, but I must say educators sometimes become fixated on what IDEA, FAFE and LRE, (Least Restrictive Environment) means in an INDIVIDUAL education Plan. The "focus" should be on the child and the goal should be to come up with the best plan for the child EVEN when the plan may be inconvenient and challenging. Related services transforms lives! And- if the plan does not work, re-work the plan. The goal is to find the triggers, (with a Functional Behavior Assessment, "FBA") that impede the child and create a positive intervention plan, (Behavioral Intervention Plan, "BIP") to address the challenging behavior.

I speak to parents often and their primary concern is creating a plan that grows with their child. IEP meetings in some cases are extremely intimidating to parents. The best advice I would give to my fellow educators is to be nimble. Try to walk in the shoes of the students you serve and remind yourself that you are shaping our future. I am grateful, my aunt, Dr. Patricia Ann Harvey did her part. Well done!

### Audio Clip



NewsNight Minnesota | Patricia Harvey | Season 2000 | Episode 114  
Discussion with Patricia Harvey, Superintendent of St. Paul Schools.

[VIDEO](#)



NewsNight Minnesota | February 8, 2001 | Season 2001 | Episode 92

Educational issues with St. Paul Superintendent Patricia Harvey, Interview with Jesse...

[VIDEO](#)

In case you missed it ... [January Newsletter](#)

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