



## Transitions, Transitions, Transitions!

Time is moving at WHARP speed. In approximately one year our daughter will move to the next phase of life. There is so much to do. Homecoming, Prom, SAT preparation, ACT preparation, College Board registration, essay writing, resume building, searching for scholarships and finding the perfect fit for college. Our daughter is very specific about her goals. Like her big sister it is the theater or BUST. Today we started the process of touring colleges. So MUCH to learn- again!

My husband and I have been through this rodeo before. We watched the stress, tears, frustration and joy of moving from junior to senior year and the fear and anxiety associated with the unknown of what comes next. This time it is slightly different for us. We are taking time to evaluate if the college space has the social and emotional support required to cultivate a positive cultural environment for our daughter as she transitions into adulthood. Space Matters! Although we are just at the beginning of this journey, we were pleased to learn that Eckerd College cares about the social impact of the community at large.

[More Information about  
Eckerd College](#)



The St. Pete Center for Civic Engagement and Social Impact is relatively new at Eckerd College, but it sends a message to parents and students about the value of the college and the desire for inclusion. Our daughter felt that connection today during her tour. She was met by an exceptional accessibility team at Eckerd College and provided a sensory private tour. Again-How you enter impacts your overall experience. Thriving is half the battle of a successful tenure in college.

Eckerd College Excellence

Sometimes people do not succeed because someone failed to open a door or at least open it a little. Transitions matter for everyone. We only hope other schools have the same philosophy toward inclusivity.

## Arizona and Florida???

Well, this is a new one! Arizona and Florida at the top of the list for services for Autistic persons? I honestly had never heard of Certified Autistic Cities or Centers, but apparently both Arizona and Florida top this list. In all seriousness, Mesa, Arizona is now the first autism certified city in the world. What does that mean? In sum, hotels, tourist sites, parks, restaurants and community programs are incentivized to provide an environment conducive to the autistic population.

This is quite a game changer for families in many ways. Often, families with loved ones on the spectrum do not travel or elect not to travel because it is simply difficult. The challenges of new environments, locating sensory friendly or safe spaces, and finding understanding businesses and people make families bonkers. The stress also exacerbates family dynamics. Families often make a decision to travel without their loved one the spectrum - which causes tremendous guilt - or choose to take their loved one-which can alter the experience if we are honest. I can only imagine how different travel would have been with designated safe spaces.



**Visit Mesa:** The First Autism Certified City in the world



**11 Certified Autism Centers** Around the U.S.

Visit Mesa has taken a giant leap toward providing families and individuals impacted by ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder.

[Read All About it](#)

Extensive training from renowned autism experts help these destinations create an inclusive experience for visitors.

[Learn More](#)

While I am not the biggest fan of leaving one HOT climate for another HOT climate- I may have to reconsider. The benefits of peace of mind and importance of creating lasting memories with both our young ladies are priceless.

Florida > Arizona? - Arizona > Florida?

## Sister Soulmate

So, I met this woman, well not yet in person-but I KNOW her already. Strange right? A mutual friend introduced me to Krista Kepler Capo. She apparently knew that we would IMMEDIATELY connect even though we have not spent any significant time together. She was right. Krista and I share the same story of mothers who passionately and unapologetically advocate for our autistic children and families and share our story with reluctant transparency. Like Krista, I blog weekly on my family experiences, but her blogs are FAR more interesting and colorful. In our brief conversations I immediately felt connected to someone who knows what it feels like to give your all - ALL the time.

**Autism Mom Rants**

KRISTA LYNNETTE

[Learn More](#)

Krista shared her passion for her son Dane's amazing artistic talent. Her advocacy and leadership allowed her to open doors for her son in ways she imagined but is actually now realizing. Her son is an intern, soon to be a paid intern and will soon revolutionize how we engage with artists in the corporate space. You can never truly go back through every step and reflect on what you did to get where you are - you just KNOW - you did the MOST and it is all coming to fruition.

I asked Krista how she feels about her son's achievements. Some words are edited - ha-ha - but to sum up her feeling in one word- EXHILIRATING!

"He started his internship 2 months ago and we are hoping it will soon become a paid one and he will stay on even after graduation in 3 weeks! We had the opportunity to talk to so many individuals about the importance of diversity in the workspace. Last night was magic and something I never saw coming and thought would never exist or be attainable to us. But there we were standing with the founder of an international company having important conversations that will open more doors for people with disabilities."

Krista went on to share her conviction for the "Danes" of the world who have a

desire and passion to find purpose in the world. She did this!. Her love, patience, devotion, believe and perseverance placed Dane right where he was meant to be.

You Better Do It Sister Soulmate.

[Follow Dane Capo Art on Social Media](#)

## DANE CAPO ART

[Visit Dane Capo Art Website](#)



## From your RED SISTER

A very special THANK YOU to the women of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc, Zeta Upsilon Omega Chapter for mentoring our daughter and so many, many others. This past week some very special young ladies were introduced as Ebony Pearls Debutantes to the community at large. The night was one our family will never forget.

### 2023 Essence of Ebony Pearls Debutante Cotillion

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Zeta Upsilon Omega Chapter, hosted its 12th Biennial Essence of Ebony Pearls Debutante Cotillion on Saturday, March 18, at the historic Coliseum in downtown St. Pete.

[Read All About It](#)



Pictured Miss Debutante 2023, Mykenzi Davis-Cowart and her escort, Michael Moten.

## In case you missed it! [February Newsletter](#)

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Featured Podcast This Month!



David Moran

David speaks about how he has been inspired to help others from an early age.



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