



Tue Future Is NOW



Do You Remember?

For the first time since I began writing this newsletter, nearly 4 years ago, I was not inspired to share my thoughts. Hurricane Helene admittedly took the wind out of my sails. Even if you did not experience personal loss, viewing so much devastation is overwhelming to the mind and spirit. Our family personally did not experience loss that we cannot recover from, but we did lose so many photos, mementos and personal items that shape our memories and life. Moreover, I lost many Autism Spectrum Resources I saved before we were in this digital world to help others on their journey. My spirit was finally moved to share what I do remember, or at least start documenting one article at a time.



I was reminded that visual support was so important to assisting our daughter, Emersen. In the early years she needed constant visual support to bring our world to hers. For example, I would take family photos and go over every

aspect of the picture.

- Where are we in the photo?
- What colors do you see?
- What do you remember about the day?
- What would you do differently?
- Describe your expression?
- What do you think the other people in the photo were thinking of?



We would take the photos and spell everything in them, like flower, or dog or grass, etc. The photo experience did so much for her basic understanding of context.



"Photography and Autism: 5 Benefits for Neurodiverse Adults"

"Explore the positive aspects of photography, particularly those that could benefit individuals who have received a late ASD diagnosis."

[Read Article](#)



Our family also gave our daughter a phone, camera or any recording device pretty early. Turns out it helped her see the world in 360 instead of Black and White. We would often ask, **Do You Remember.....?**

Being both in front of the camera and behind the camera helped her understand the world around her and allowed us to connect with her when she had challenges connecting with us.

This Dog made a HUGE difference in OUR Lives!

I do not know how I met Kim Strickland, Owner and Speech-Language Pathologist at The Kids' Clinic of Tampa Bay, but I remember she came into our lives at a time where our family was struggling. Our daughter started a new school that had some support, but mostly for children with learning challenges not children who are bright but have communication

challenges. In comes Kim Strickland with her dog, Tillie and later, Dmitri. For nearly three years, Tillie and Dmitri CHANGED our daughter's life. She talked about them adnasuem. Our daughter went from not really enjoying school to waking up early to prepare for the end of the day. I asked Emersen what she liked best about those days and she said,

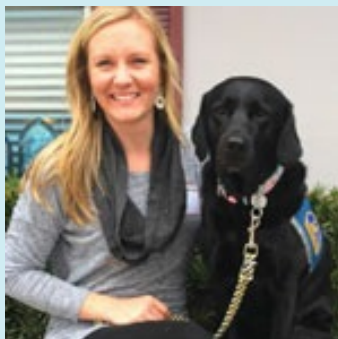


"Working with Ms. Kim, Tillie and Dmitri helped me focus. They made me want to learn and this made me want to be present. Although Ms. Kim was a bit of a focus police, she used her dogs to force us to check in and it worked."

Emersen Jackson

Back to those memories, I found so many tools, Kim educated our family with and unfortunately, Hurricane Helene destroyed most of them. To families on the spectrum, I would highly recommend pet ownership. It helps soften the days and regulate emotional issues.

THANK YOU KIM!



Meet Tillie!

Watch how Kim and Tillie work as a therapy team.

[Watch Video](#)

Good Teachers Matter!

Both of our daughters attended Canterbury School of Florida. While there where many exceptional teachers there by far Mimi Bridge and Marianne Sweeney tranformed our lives. Both of these amazing educators taught to the



student. They curated the experience based on the student's ability, curiosity, family situation, emotional intelligence and most importantly did it with a LOT OF LOVE! As I was digging through my many memories so many of the early year art, videos, and other milestones were intertwined with them.

The best advice I ever received was from my aunt, Dr. Patricia Ann Harvey, a former Superintendent of the St. Paul School System. She said, "...nothing administration does or does not do matters if the teacher is uninterested in the child. The work takes place in those four walls!" That statement resonated with me for many years. My focus changed from watching to listening more.

Teachers, no doubt have an extremely difficult job, particularly in the modern area. BUT the best of them create lasting experiences and allow families to breathe and ultimately contribute to student success.

Thank you Mimi and Marianne for setting the bar HIGH! Good Teachers Matter and our children, now young adults are grounded in part because your compassion!

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