

To whom this may concern:

My son, Anthony has struggled with a learning disability since starting school. I know how hard that is because I had similar learning disabilities and still do. Even though he's been interested in sports, he was never allowed to do them until he got into high school. Then he was told he could. He's always loved to swim, so he decided to go out for his high school swim team. With help and a lot of encouragement, he managed to do good with his grades and got to swim through the season with his team.

After the swim season ended, unfortunately, something happened with Anthony and he became very angry and self destructive and started to self harm. He started failing classes that he was passing easily. It seemed that Anthony had just crashed and given up. The school tried to help, and I also was taking Anthony to a counselor.

But unfortunately, Anthony didn't pull out of what I can only consider as depression until after the school year ended, and I don't know why. He quit hurting himself and seemed to be back to my bright, amazing, funny and loving son.

We can't go back and fix whatever happened to him that caused the dark time or the result of it. However, we can look ahead. I know Anthony is looking forward and is back on track this year. He's really hoping to swim again with his high school team. I believe swimming gives Anthony direction and something to focus on. I am so afraid now, that because of his grades at the end of last year, he may not be allowed to.

As an unsupported working single parent and not knowing what caused my son to be so self destructive, it scares me to think of what might happen to him if he doesn't get to do swimming. He has a hard time having just a mom to talk to because I don't understand everything he's going through. Luckily, he's become closer to his teachers and his principle and is open with them when he's having a hard time. So with that, I think he has become stronger and believes in himself more.

I'm hoping he will get the chance to show how far he's come since last year, and that he'll get to do swim, since that is the one thing he has looked forward to getting back into.

At the end of 8th grade, I was told that IF Anthony was able to graduate, he'd have to have a modified diploma or he wouldn't be able to graduate with his class. But high school started and something just clicked and he got it. I believe that participating with the swim team made a whole lot of difference in his self-esteem and being proud of who he is. He had to put extra effort into trying and found out he could do it.

I'm so proud of Anthony because he is now on track and ready to graduate with his class, and **won't** need a modified diploma. I am doing everything in my power to encourage and help him, as much as I can with my own learning disabilities.

I truly believe that being part of the swim team this year will help him continue on a successful life journey. He needs it. Please make a decision that will be part of the solution so my son will have a better chance of become a healthy contributing person in society. That is what I hope and pray for.

Sincerely,

Jami Kiser

