Chimes for Tyler

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Autism, also known as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is defined as a disorder of brain development. Individuals with autism demonstrate difficulties with social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication, and repetitive behaviors, and many others experience intellectual disability, difficulties in motor coordination, and attention and physical health issues.

April 2, 2016 will be the 8th annual World Autism Awareness Day. World Autism Awareness Day is observed 2nd of April every year and is recognized by countries around the world to raise awareness about autism throughout the world. It is a significant day for our family because my oldest son, Tyler, has autism.

My husband Sean and I did not know anything about autism and had no real concerns about Tyler’s development when he was very young. He did seem to take a little longer than other children his age to begin speaking, and the teachers at his nursery school observed that he would often do things on his own rather than play with the other kids and do what the teachers asked. When we addressed this with our doctor he suggested that we start observing him for other unusual behaviours. As Tyler got older and demonstrated other behaviours not typical of children his age, we started reading more about autism, so by the time he was officially diagnosed at around 3 years of age we were not surprised and were ready to face this challenge head-on.

The years since Tyler’s diagnosis have been filled with many tribulations; doctor appointments, educational seminars, hour upon hours of special (and expensive) therapy sessions, medications, and worst of all, strange looks and judgment from people when we are out and about when Tyler has one of his “meltdowns” that, while rare with Tyler, is typical of children with autism. While Sean and I have learned to “turn the other cheek” when we feel we are being stared at when these things happen, it is still difficult to ignore, and is just one of the many things we have been forced to learn how to deal and live with as parents of a child with autism.

As difficult and stressful as our lives may seem, there are also many rewards for having a child with autism; Tyler is considered as having “high-functioning autism”, as he is fully communicative and currently in the normal school grade for his age. We have made great friends with other people in the autism community. Tyler has won several academic achievement awards for his class, and has demonstrated the ability to do very well with his school work when he has the focus to do so. He is a friendly, fun-loving and affectionate boy, and is a good big brother to Zachary and Nathan. And yes, Tyler
has that one “special ability” that is often a characterization of children with autism. This ability is to identify a wind chime by hearing just a few notes of it.

Tyler loved wind chimes as a very young child. He would go onto websites to listen and learn about all the different kinds of wind chimes. Woodstock Chimes, an international manufacturer and distributor of wind chimes, learned about Tyler’s unique ability, and developed a special wind chime through his inspiration to promote awareness about autism and to raise funding for autism programs and research. The result was the “Woodstock Chimes for Autism”, and a special promotional video, “Chimes for Tyler – Tyler’s Story”, of which Tyler is the star, and has received almost 150,000 views on YouTube:


“Chimes for Tyler” has also been featured at several international film festivals, most of which promote awareness of autism and other disabilities. We are so very proud of Tyler and our association with Woodstock Chimes. We are touched that they chose Tyler to be the face of their promotion for the Woodstock Chimes for Autism, and that our son is playing a big role in Autism awareness. But most importantly, he is contributing to research that may solve the puzzle which will hopefully lead to improved diagnosis, therapies or medications that may help those affected by autism.