

To Incoming REACH Parents in the fall of 2014,

We wanted to write a quick letter to you with the benefit of a year's hindsight. Our son will be starting his sophomore year in the program this fall.

Moving away from home for college is a major life change and one that can be both exhilarating and stressful. For any parent, it can be difficult to disengage, but especially so when our children are facing certain issues and challenges. There may then be the added stressor of moving some distance away if you live far from the school as we do in New Jersey.

What we can share with you is that you can take great comfort in the professionalism and compassion of Edie and her team. Your child will be in a supportive and nurturing environment and one that will ensure their safety while encouraging them to enhance their life skills to become independent.

The REACH Program offers a truly unique opportunity for our children. It provides support in academics, life skills and career selection while also integrating them into the main student population, allowing them to truly enjoy the college experience. We looked at numerous other programs and there were none that offered the balance of this supportive environment and inclusion in the college community.

This balance allows them to grow and to make their own decisions. It is so gratifying to see the self-confidence of these students grow as they mature and become more independent.

Another very important aspect of the REACH Program is that the students learn to address their differences, not to shy away from them or be ashamed. They don't hide behind labels, but rather learn to recognize that while there are certain things that may be more difficult or challenging for them, that everybody has things that are more challenging for them. And like other students, there are things that they do well and can take pride in. By not hiding behind labels and by interfacing with the traditional students, they both nurture new friendships and also act as ambassadors against the stigma associated with "handicapped" kids.

In closing, we congratulate you and your child for being selected to the Program and we can tell you confidently that your child is extremely fortunate to be a part of it. In our opinion, there is no better mixture of passionate people who will be caring for your child combined with an enriching environment that will help them fulfill their potential. You can rest easily knowing that while there may be some geography between you, that your child could not be in better hands.

Regards,

Terry and Tom