

# Angela D. Leonard

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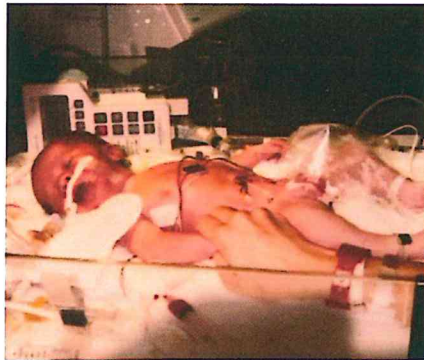
# AL

10/17/17

Dear VICC:

I am writing to express to you the "real" reason for the awesomely important work you do! As I am no longer a VICC member, rotating off as of September, it is with real gratitude to the professionals in Early Intervention, the council and its supervision of these services that I must bow out with much appreciation. As we all sit around a big table and talk about numbers, services, communication and programs, it must be the people we remember; the lives that are changed and the mountains that are climbed.

Although my son, Joshua, is now 22 years old, he is a success, a joy and a contributing member of society. He earns a paycheck, and is preparing to live semi-independently in our community of Roanoke, Virginia. The statistics were stacked against him. After emergency surgery at less than 14 hours of age, he had less than a 15% chance of survival.



1995



2017

I am happy to report that he did survive and he is living his life to the fullest. Joshua's father and I 100% attribute his success to Early Intensive Intervention services that he received. Joshua will always need support, and, thankfully, he has had the systems in place for a healthy, happy life, as anyone deserves. We are so convinced that his successes in life were attributed to early intervention supports, that we started an organization with two students and two teachers in 2002 to help others like him, just through EI. That organization has grown today to become SVH Services which includes the Blue Ridge Autism and Achievement Centers, has served over 450 families in Virginia and currently employs 142 people in the Roanoke, Lynchburg and Lexington areas serving those with disabilities across the lifespan.

We were profoundly impacted by EI services as a family. Joshua is the shining example of what we CAN continue to do, if the supports are there and you start early! As you continue your mighty work, remember Joshua and those like him. I implore you to have those stories shared often around that big table, so you can pat yourselves on the back for a job well done! I will miss you all.

Sincerely,



Angela D. Leonard



# This is Early Intervention.... 20 years later!!!

