

As I was preparing to write a testimonial for A Sporting Chance, my mind kept drifting back to a dear friend of mine who passed away in April. She was a testament to how a person commits their entire life to their children with disabilities. She bent over backwards to help me with my group from Willard. She helped when and wherever I needed her. A Sporting Chance gave me the opportunity to spend countless hours with her. She not only was a volunteer for me and my group of athletes, but she was my friend. The following is a testimonial she gave me in 2007 about A Sporting Chance.

*November 29, 2007*

*To Whom It May Concern:*

*I wish to express my thoughts and praise for the Sporting Chance program.*

*I have a 16 year old deaf son and a 15 year old son who is learning challenged and both of them participate in Sporting Chance events yearly. They both look forward to getting together with their peers to participate in such events as bowling and track.*

*Sporting Chance has allowed them to compete on a level equal to their abilities with no pressure (except what they put on themselves!) and allows them to learn to compete, practice, and interact with others who may have challenges as they do.*

*As a parent, this means more to me than if they were on a National team! Sporting Chance is for the kids and allows the kids to be just that-kids-no matter what their disability is or how contractured their bodies are. They are allowed to be the best they can be and without a care of what others might think of them. The smiles on the competitors faces are genuine and unpretentious! We are serving numerous children in the Willard District with multiple disabilities and even ones in wheelchairs.*

*We drive by the bowling alley and my son who is deaf will start signing to me that he is ready to go bowling again with his "team". This is an extremely fond memory to him. He does the same thing*

*when we pass the school where the track and field events are held. He never forgets and that means a lot to a parent to know that these things are so important that they make such an impression on an otherwise emotionless child!*

*We are very grateful for the opportunities that Sporting Chance provides to our family. We “get” to go to the track meets, bowling tournaments, etc. that mean so much to the kids. The boys get to be their best! The volunteers are awesome with the kids and each child is a winner! This program is the most awesome thing for a child to get to be a child without prejudice no matter what their ability in life is all about!*

*Pam Jackson 2597 W. Farm Road 76 Springfield MO 65803*

A Sporting Chance has made me grow as a person. I have taken on responsibilities that I never thought I would as an educator. It touches my heart and soul to see students who necessarily may not do well with academics or who are physically disabled, succeed in a sporting event and something in their life that they never knew they could do. It shows that everyone has abilities to be the very best they can. At every event I have participated in, I have never had a dry eye. I have seen something amazing happen with an individual participating in a sporting event at every event. I have witnessed smiles on children who seldom smile. I have seen behaviors disappear in individuals who have a hard time concentrating in the classroom or at home. I have seen people with physical disabilities, throw a ball, walk the track, or bowl a strike. I see many student's who have graduated or moved to other districts, and I can count on seeing them at some event with A Sporting Chance. Nothing makes my day more than seeing a child succeed.

On a personal note, I appreciate all the friendships I have made because of A Sporting Chance. I have made great friends with Dick and Georgia. They are witty and work so well with people with disabilities. They have become important people in my life on a personal and professional level. As the district facilitator for A Sporting Chance, I have been able to get to know more people from other schools. I have learned to count on these people and they are testaments to what it really means to be there for the kids, giving up many Saturday's for practice and sporting events.

Thank you to A Sporting Chance for continuing this program, even in very hard times. I appreciate all you do for our children who have disabilities and the community. Without you, many people would never have the opportunity to participate in a sporting event, make new friends, and see success in life.