

Saturday morning, December 28<sup>th</sup> I hear a clunk from the living room followed by an infectious giggle that can only come from a happy five year old boy. I see a cat dart down the hall. It can only mean one thing, Christopher is on the hunt. Even the cats are ducking and running as he plays with his new nerf gun. I did not get to see this shot; I was in the kitchen cooking breakfast, his favorite French toast with sausage patties and sliced bananas. Life is as bliss as it has ever been. It wasn't always this way. One year ago life was so different. Christopher hardly spoke, when he did it was usually one word followed by a scream. Kicking, biting and hair pulling were the norm for how he should get a toy. There was no smiling, no giggling of a happy child. Everybody was exhausted.

I have what I consider to be a good job with what I thought was good insurance. Things quickly turned south finding out that my insurance covers positively nothing to help with Autism. After seeing the bills I understand why. Exhausted 401K's, slashed budgets, prepaid cell phones, non-existent TV service, along with date night and vacations, all gone. This was just to get speech and occupational therapy. One night I saw a ten second blurb about a trial program (Autism Waiver Program) I applied the next day online. The first day they came with two therapists, for 3 hours in my home. It was hard to watch. Afterwards; exhausted, we cooked dinner. I remember this so well; it was the first night that I got Chris to sit at the table and eat dinner with us. It must seem so insignificant. After that Chris took off like a rocket ship, meeting or beating all expectations set forth by his therapist. If someone asked me if there was a cure for Autism, I would answer, yes and the State of Utah found it. However the price for this kind of therapy puts this well out of reach of the majority of Utahans. Having have checked into this, I would have to give 2/3 of my paycheck pre-taxed. Christopher has a very long road ahead of him.

Your job is not an easy one. I like most people, elect people to office and ridicule them when you see them do something like talking about legalizing Marijuana, what a Joke. This, this is no joke. You literally hold the futures to multiple thousands of Utah family's. I know there is no way you could pencil this out. You could offset the cost with what you would end up spending on untreated autistic adults. Even then you would still have sticker shock. I wonder what your first day on the job was like. I imagine the reasons you had for getting into this job. I would hope this is that reason. How more noble of a reason could there be but to try and find the funding for this life altering therapy. What you have given to my family is nothing less than a miracle.

I have quietly thought to myself, in a place in my head that I shouldn't be. What if Adam Lanza had had the same therapy that my son got? A misguided, socially inept teen that was confirmed to be on the spectrum. Of course I can't answer that. I can tell you with certainty that he would have been a happier, more well-adjusted person.

Included with this letter is a selfie that my son took of himself with my phone. Christopher; an energetic, loving 5 year old boy with all the hopes, desires and **FUTURE** of a typical 5 year old. In spite of Autism.

Sincerely, with love in my life and hope in my heart. Please see your way to find funding for this project. I promise you that an investment in my son is not a losing one.

Love, My whole family

