

Sally's Story...



This Christmas I wanted to share my story which will hopefully give you an insight into how important Jigsaw Trust's work is to all the individuals and families they support. I'm a single parent with a 17 year-old daughter who has Autism, additional learning difficulties, ADHD, Sensory Processing Disorder and Selective Mutism. I know my daughter will require lifetime care. Throughout her short life I have struggled and fought to get my daughter the special education and therapy provisions she needs. I've lost my business, my life savings and my good health along the way. It's been a severely challenging, exhausting and extremely emotional journey. At 10 years old my daughter was attending her second special needs school which simply could not cope with her complex special needs. She had been regressing rather than moving forward and it was clear that I needed to find something different before things got even harder for us. Then I discovered Jigsaw Trust.

Before my daughter started at Jigsaw School she couldn't "talk" outside the home. She would only try to speak in front of me and her grandmother. In addition, she couldn't stay in the same room if anyone else was in it, she couldn't cross thresholds into other rooms without falling to the ground overwhelmed with sensory overload. She couldn't feel pain. She covered her eyes when she heard loud noises and she covered her ears when she saw bright lights. She couldn't make eye contact, show affection or concentrate on anything for longer than a minute. Worst of all, she couldn't understand what was happening in the world around her from one minute to the next. She was permanently frightened, volatile and extremely difficult to manage. She was scared of everything in our world, a danger to herself and others, unable to understand any shouts of warning and with no comprehension of staying safe.

I honestly struggled to see how Jigsaw would cope with all that, when other schools had not been able to come close. I knew they were different to other special needs schools and from my initial visits I could see how passionate and caring the staff were. But I honestly didn't think anywhere could achieve what Jigsaw School has. My daughter has simply blossomed at Jigsaw. She is now 17 year's old, she can't wait to go to school. Her confidence and communication has improved significantly and that's made such big difference. She can now read well and write. She understands jokes, can run rings around a computer and takes personal care of herself. She's able to recognise some feelings in others and she's kind to her peers. Her comprehension means I can negotiate with her in simplistic terms and explain events and decisions so she can understand what's happening in our world. Most importantly, she looks me in the eye and she tells me she loves me, and I can tell she means it too. I nearly died the first time she said that!

Jigsaw has achieved all this. Jigsaw pulled my child out of her silent, lonely and closed off world into my world, and then gave her some basic tools to cope with it. Jigsaw Trust is a truly remarkable charity and I've seen first-hand the massive difference Jigsaw makes to the lives of our most vulnerable children and young adults and consequently to the lives of their family members. Thank you for reading my account. Whatever your circumstances, whether you've seen your own child, friend or relative blossom at Jigsaw or whether you already recognise the incredible work this charity offers, hopefully this has given you another insight into the wonderful work Jigsaw Trust continues to offer.

Merry Christmas!

Sally
JIGSAW PARENT

PS: If you can, please consider supporting Jigsaw Trust this Christmas. You can do so via the link below

