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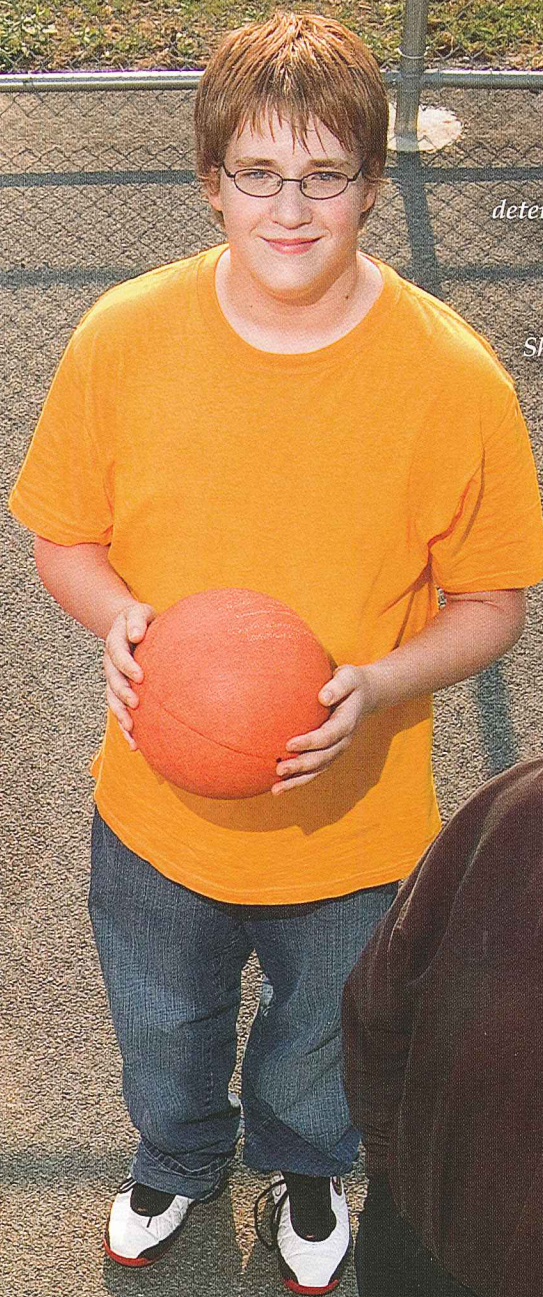
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ADOLESCENT WITH AUTISM SHOOTS FOR SUCCESS

This circle of support has made all the difference for our family.

— Wendy Ritchey

Shayne Webb (middle) is thriving because of his determination and the support from therapeutic support counselors, Megan Rhykerd (left) and Aaron Gindlesperger (right). Shayne's mother, Wendy Ritchey, is pleased with her son's progress.



CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES OFFER SCHOOL AND HOME-BASED SUPPORT

If he missed the school van, Shayne Webb would stop dead in his tracks. "Changing his daily schedule would throw him for a loop," said Shayne's mother, Wendy Ritchey.

Since his days at Roaring Spring Elementary, Shayne has had extreme difficulty dealing with change and using problem-solving skills when a situation arose or tempers flared.

Wendy's instincts told her there was a deeper, underlying cause to these behaviors and a mother's intuition rarely fails. Wendy was right. She sought help from Home Nursing Agency's children's behavioral health services when Shayne was in sixth grade. He was diagnosed with an emotional disorder known as Asperger's Syndrome, a form of autism affecting a child's capacity to develop relationships and effectively communicate.

"Prior to his diagnosis, we were frustrated because we could see his great potential, but didn't know how to reach it," said Wendy.

Now 14-years-old, Shayne is within reach of his goals. He's reaching for a life where aggression has no place, and where his coping skills and self-confidence rule the day both at school and at home. Since June of 2006, this avid Penn State and basketball fan has improved by leaps and bounds with the support and expertise of Megan Rhykerd and Aaron Gindlesperger.

Megan and Aaron are two of the Agency's 30 therapeutic support staff (TSS) who provide assistance to children and adolescents throughout school districts in Blair and Centre Counties. With their guidance, Shayne has learned to cope with the sensory issues often aggravated by Asperger's,

and is thriving because of his willingness to employ some of the communication techniques he has learned.

For the past year, Megan has accompanied Shayne during school and has worked alongside his teachers and peer-group at Central High School in Martinsburg. "Shayne's communication skills have really developed, which has benefited him all the way around. From building his social networking skills to transitioning into different environments with greater ease, Shayne is motivated to change and it's really reflective in his school work," said Megan.

Not only has Shayne learned to be more tolerant and to think 'outside the box', he also enacted some test-taking strategies which have been very successful. "This year, Shayne will be taking the PSSA test for the first time," said Aaron, who has assisted Shayne after school and at home. Shayne

would freeze up and experience heightened anxiety prior to taking tests. Now, he knows how to implement coping techniques that help diffuse his anxiety.

"We've learned from Shayne as much as he's learned from us. Shayne has taught us that you can accomplish anything. He's a real inspiration and a good listener," said Aaron. According to Wendy, Aaron is extremely dependable and approachable, and Shayne has responded positively to Aaron's approach.

"I am so pleased with the encouragement and peer-support we've received from the school and Home Nursing Agency," said Wendy. This circle of support has made all the difference for our family," she said.

For more information on child and adolescent behavioral health services, call 800.445.6262