Inspiring Success

The Ramos Family

When Sharon and Robert Ramos became parents they were like all parents, full of joy and expectations; but by the time their son Robby was in fifth grade they knew there was something different about him. From that point on it was almost impossible to know what to expect from day to day. As a family, the Ramos’ lives turned upside down and they became focused on how to make sure their son was in the best environment possible. They met with one doctor after another visiting numerous specialized facilities. Their will and patience were tested but their strength as a family held them together.

Robby was diagnosed with ADHD and Mood Disorder NOS (not otherwise specified). He battled depression, had heated outbursts when asked to do something he did not like and was simply unpredictable. Sharon and Robert did everything they could to help their child be happy, healthy and excel in school. After 5th grade, this meant taking Robby out of public elementary school and placing him in a specialized school. Robby spent two disastrous years at his new school. He acted out and spent only a fraction of the day actually in the classroom. Sharon became particularly concerned for her son’s safety; “He didn’t feel emotionally safe at school, and it seemed as if their staff had clearly given up on us.”

After leaving this school, the Ramos family learned the ins and outs of emergency rooms and hospital psychiatric units. At one point, Robby spent two weeks as an out-patient at Franciscan Children’s Hospital. It was later suggested to Sharon and Robert that their son should spend the summer there. Sharon and Robert worked actively with their local out of district coordinator who did extensive research on alternative placements for Robby. Eventually, the coordinator suggested looking at the Manville School at Judge Baker Children’s Center.

Robby spent four years at Manville, and both Sharon and Robert agree that these were the best years for their family. “When I first came to see the school and met with Jim Prince, the school director, he assured me that they were never going to call and tell me to come pick up my son,” said Sharon. “Those were such reassuring words to hear after what we had been through.” From the moment Robby started at Manville he excelled. Sharon and Robert believe it was due to having the right staff surround him and help him in every way. In 2009, Robby left Manville to attend the New England Academy, a high school focused on helping children with learning disabilities. The New England Academy has a very extensive admissions process, and the Ramos’ believe this is the best place to prepare Robby for college. Robby is now doing well, and excelling in school due to the preparation he received at the Manville School. “It is only thanks to the high standards that Manville set for Robby (academically and behaviorally) that he was able to gain enrollment to the New England Academy program,” said Sharon.

Sharon and Robert have been active donors to Judge Baker Children’s Center since 2007. They respond positively to every appeal they receive. “We’ll do anything the Baker asks of us,” stated Sharon as her husband commented, “It’s simple, we want other kids to be as lucky as ours was.” The Ramos family has had a very interesting seven
years. “When all of this started we were a disaster,” said Robert. “We were walking around on eggshells. I was always wondering what was going to happen next but now I feel so free and I know he’s going to be fine.” The positive attitudes of both Sharon and Robert are very evident. They love their son for who he is and have learned how to handle whatever comes next. “Robby still has bad days, but those bad days are not nearly as bad as before Manville,” said Sharon. “If Manville didn’t exist, our whole path would have been different. Robby probably would have been more of a special needs adult simply because we didn’t have any appropriate place to send him.”

Robby is now 17, and most of the time his moods are typical of a 17-year-old boy. He has many friends and has excelled in academics. “Overall he’s really an awesome kid, very caring, very fun,” said Sharon. “As a family we’ve learned to have fun with his ticks and his differences.” Sharon and Robert are now focused on getting Robby through his last two years of high school and then into college. The Ramos family support of Judge Baker Children’s Center is cherished. It is wonderful to know that the staff and teachers at Manville School made such a positive impact on this family. It is obvious that the Ramos family thinks fondly of their time at Manville. They continue to support the Baker’s fundraising efforts even now after Robby has outgrown the Baker. Thank you to the Ramos family for continuing to give back and helping support the Baker’s programs and services. This support along with the support of our other loyal donors will lead to many more success stories in the future.

Sharon and Robert Ramos and their sons, Robby and 13 year-old Carl, live in Salem, MA.