

Leonardtwn Middle School

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Mrs. Lisa Bachner, Principal

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February 29, 2008

Senator Roy D. Dyson
James Senate Office Building, Room 102
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senator Dyson:

As the Principal of Leonardtown Middle School (LMS), I am writing to show my support for Senate Bill 477 and House Bill 895, requiring the Governor to proclaim the month of May as "Dandy-Walker Syndrome and Hydrocephalus Awareness Month".

George [REDACTED] is a typical eighth grade student at LMS. He is friendly with both staff and other students, works hard, and enjoys eating lunch with his friends. The only difference between him and the other eighth graders is that George suffers from Dandy-Walker Syndrome and Hydrocephalus. George has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that the staff of LMS manages along with Mr. and Mrs. [REDACTED] providing accommodations for his learning disabilities that result from his medical conditions.

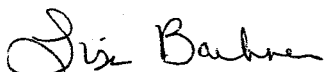
Although I have only known George for six months, he has proven to be a very dedicated student and a true inspiration to children with or without disabilities. He is part of our Best Buddies Program, where he assists students that are more challenged than he is. He is also a member of the eighth grade Chorus and was selected this year to participate in the Tri-County competition. Recently he did a great job at our school Talent Show by playing the bass guitar in a duet with his brother Brendan. They both were "hits", especially with our female population who squealed with delight throughout the performance.

Everyone here at LMS is very proud of George. His testimony today in front of your committee is a great opportunity for him to give back to the community by sharing his story. The more you get to know George; you will see how he is a significant part of the Dandy-Walker Syndrome and Hydrocephalus Awareness movement across the country.

With the passage of these two bills, the state of Maryland will proclaim to the world how we care about all of our kids no matter the struggles they and their families face. As an educator, I can think of no greater lesson to pass on to our children, than the one that offers hope and compassion for those less fortunate in society. The important work you and your colleagues in the General Assembly are attempting to accomplish with the passage of this legislation will profoundly affect children and families for generations to come.

Thank you for this opportunity to recognize George and for your work on behalf of Maryland's children.

Sincerely,



Lisa Bachner
Principal