

Facing the Challenge

A NEWSLETTER BY **maaps** TO INFORM YOU AND TO CELEBRATE OUR STUDENTS

Lyndsi

A Father's Story

In May 2000, within a month of finishing her freshman year in high school, my daughter Lyndsi was competing in an afternoon soccer game at school.



Bob, Lyndsi, and Lesli at the Special Olympics. Lyndsi is a student at The May Center for Education and Neurorehabilitation.

As she was running full force down the field, the ball got twisted under her feet and Lyndsi was thrown up, landing hard on her head.

Lyndsi's fall on the soccer field was much more serious than her mother Lesli and I could have imagined on the day the accident happened. The blow to the left side of her head resulted in a number of complications. It caused brain damage and seriously weakened the right side of her body.

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Following a year of intensive inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation therapy, Lesli and I worked with the administration at Lyndsi's high school to begin her transition back to school. She began with part-time attendance, and in the fall of 2001, Lyndsi returned to high school full-time. This proved to be one of the most difficult times for my daughter, as well as for Lesli and me. It was around this time that we started to realize how challenging it would be for Lyndsi to regain her social skills to a level that was acceptable to her peers and the general public.

Oftentimes, there were problems at lunchtime and in the halls between classes. Lyndsi was bothered by the loud noise and constant over-stimulation, which usually ended with her crying. The school administration began asking themselves if they had the ability to educate Lyndsi. During the spring, we visited the May Institute school with Lyndsi and decided to take the necessary steps to enroll her.

About Facing the Challenge

Facing the Challenge is published by the Massachusetts Association of 766 Approved Private Schools (**maaps**) which represents 95 private day and residential schools approved by the Massachusetts Department of Education to provide highly specialized education and treatment services to over 6,000 of the state's most disabled and disadvantaged students. For more information, contact **maaps** at 781-245-1220.

Since entering the May Institute's school for brain injury in September 2002, Lyndsi has made very good progress. She has gained strength physically and is starting to participate in sports again. Lyndsi recently participated with a team from the May School, completing the 100-meter run and long jump as part of a local Special Olympics.

Lyndsi's academic skills, particularly math and reading, are really improving and she is making good progress. She is also becoming more independent, from doing homework, to taking care of herself and being able to perform her daily living routines.

Behaviorally, Lyndsi has improved. She is better able to conduct herself socially and in group situations.

I want to acknowledge the teachers, therapists, and staff of the May School for all their help. Their educational and behavioral strategies are helping Lyndsi to reach her most optimal recovery.

Written by Bob Binford, father of Lyndsi, a student at the May Institute's school exclusively for children and adolescents with brain injury.

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The Teacher Shortage is a Staff Crisis in Private Special Education Schools

When public school districts have a student with disabilities so severe that the district cannot provide an adequate education, the student is referred to state approved private special education schools. Cities, towns and the Commonwealth, ask these private schools to educate the most disabled, most difficult and troubled students.

Ironically, the average teacher salary in these private schools is only \$30,700 compared to

\$48,650 in Massachusetts' public schools. Salaries for other critical direct care staff are also far lower than public employee counterparts. This huge discrepancy has resulted in very high staff turnover rates over the past three years. The annual turnover rates for teachers are between 20% to 38% and for child care workers, 43% to 65%.

To make their students successful, **maaps** member schools need a well trained, experienced work force of teachers, child care workers and other professionals. **maaps** is committed to working with its members to ensure success for both its member schools and their students.



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