

## Thank Goodness for Mrs. Colette!

First let me tell you about my son Luka. At a very young age we were told Luka was different. I just saw him as curious and very aware of the realities of life. Misunderstood, it made it difficult for him to make friends, even if he would try very hard. First diagnosed with autism, then ADHD it just didn't make any sense to me. At school, his grades were good but his social skills started to become a problem and he became very depressed.

That's when I heard about Dr. Marianne Bélanger and she cleared it all up for me. So turns out Luka had a higher than average IQ and Dyspraxia (High Potential with a *heterogeneous profile*).

As I went to his school with this diagnosis, I wasn't sure how I was going to be received. Turns out it was quite easy to get help for his Dyspraxia but nothing to stimulate and develop his potential. I felt the focus was aimed at the negative. It was really hard to make Luka see this as a gift and not a curse. As a result, I brought a book to school called 'How to teach to gifted kids'. I wasn't sure how this would be received but I left it in their hands.

A few months passed, Luka seemed happier, he finally wanted to go to school; he was calmer, he started making friends, getting along with others and being able to control and understand his emotions.

I understood why, the night I went to his parent-teacher meeting. As I sat down with Mrs. Colette (Luka's 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher), she took out the book I had given the school; she had taken notes, highlighted passages, and bookmarked pages. She started to show me all the different techniques she used with Luka. I was in tears at how much time and effort she had taken to adapt her teaching for Luka, to make him feel more involved and stimulated. She applied this in a way where the whole class would benefit and so that Luka would not feel singled out.

Mrs. Colette teaches with all her heart and soul. She is not afraid to try new things and adapt to the changing times. She motivates and inspires her class. She teaches a sense of community and responsibility. She gets them excited in a whole range of subjects from science to music. As a grade 6 teacher, she helps them get ready for the transition to high school and prepares them for the challenges ahead. She truly inspires them to be the best they can be and gives them the tools and confidence to do so. She totally turned things around for Luka, she made him feel he belonged. She showed him how to use his strengths and overcome his weakness. She is a truly dedicated teacher and that is why she deserves this award.

Audrey Theriault

Mensa member 32481