

## Communication Device leads to Greater Inclusion Opportunities

Heloise Salter's face lights up when she talks about her 16-year-old son Justin. Justin has cerebral palsy. She talks about how, although he is non-verbal, he is a very social person. "He's been in the same group of friends since third grade! He even takes his girlfriend to the movies." Of course mom goes along as well, keeping a forever watchful eye on her boy.

Heloise stresses that she has always made sure that Justin has every opportunity to do the things every kid should. She's a realist; she doesn't deny that he has disadvantages, but she does everything she can to make sure that his life is happy. "He's just a regular, well-adjusted kid."

He's been using augmentative communication devices since he was three. Recently, they got Justin a new communicative device which also acts as a TV remote, etc.

One day, "he asked me for my credit card number. I asked him what he needed it for." On further investigation, she found that he had gone through all the screens to order Braves tickets for his dad and grandpa! Heloise remarks, "How could I say, No!"



Justin visits the new Wolfpak Locker Room.

*[View more photos here!](#)*

Heloise says: Justin recently underwent surgery and is doing great! While still in the hospital, he presented and demonstrated his ability to use his communication device, to a big group of nurses in training. Word got around about his "awesome abilities." Dr. James Carroll, the Department of Neurology Chief, asked him to speak and present his communication device, and talk about himself to the Neurology Team of Doctors/Students (about 50 people) at the MCG Children's Hospital in Augusta, Georgia, last week. She said, "It went GREAT and he did a fantastic job. I introduced him and he took it from there. Dr. Carroll was extremely impressed and has asked us to come back in a few months to speak again to his Pediatric Doctors/Students as well."

Justin plays on the Miracle League baseball team. He was also asked by the President of the "Y" to speak at their board meeting (about 30 people) this month.

Justin has been featured in their local newspaper many times for his involvement in community activities. Heloise feels that this is important as it gives him purpose and a wonderful sense of fulfillment.

[Tools for Life](#) is an organization which helps people with disabilities have access to assistive technology

# ***DISABILITY ETIQUETTE***

## **Disability:**

People with speech disabilities

## **What You Need to Know:**

A person who is hearing impaired, who has had a stroke, or has cerebral palsy may have a speech impairment or disability. Some choose to communicate in sign language or writing, while others use their voice or use assistive technology.

## **Interacting With People With Disabilities:**

Don't assume a person with a speech disability has a cognitive impairment.

Try to find a quiet environment in which to communicate.

Give the person your complete attention. Never interrupt or pretend to understand when you do not.

Be patient.

Never finish a person's sentences for him.

When possible, ask questions that require short answers.

Repeat for verification if you are not sure you understand.

If repeated attempts to understand the person fail, find another method to communicate. For example, ask him to write down what he is saying.

If you have difficulty understanding someone on the telephone, use a speech-to-speech relay service.

If a person uses a communication device, make sure it is within easy reach.

If a person uses an interpreter or attendant, look directly at the person who is speaking, not the attendant.