

Come Walk in His Shoes



By

Jacob Lawrence

**Oak Park Elementary School
North Penn School District**

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When kids think of “special needs” they think of the differences in each of us. It is to bad because you will miss out on getting to know some really neat people that way. I know this because I have a brother with special needs and he has taught me a lot.

First of all I don't look at Tim as being different. I look at him as being my brother. My parents have always treated us the same so I don't see him as a person with special needs but a regular brother who can be a pain just like anyone else's sibling. But where Tim is really special is that he is always there for me. He is the biggest supporter in all my sporting events. Tim stands on the sideline cheering me on and is the first one there to congratulate me at the end of the game (whether we won or not). Just as long as I did my best is all that counts.



My brother was born with Down syndrome. He has to learn some things in a different way than we do, or at a slower rate. But that does not mean that he does everything in a different way. Tim is a very good speller and reader. He learned how to read at 3 years old. I remember

him reading the titles of the shows to me on the TV screen when I didn't know how to read. He doesn't have to study for spelling tests, he just knows how to spell the words automatically. He also is good in sports but he just doesn't like to exercise!



Tim has been going to school since he was 8 weeks old. He went to an Early Intervention School that had physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. His body was one of the things that worked at a slower rate. They had specialists to work to

make his muscles stronger so that he could learn how to sit, crawl, walk and talk. Tim worked really hard to achieve his goals. Working hard is one of the things that I most admire in Tim. He never gives up he just keeps trying until he succeeds.

My brother is a very outgoing kid. If you get to know him you would really like him. When he was little he would go the grocery store with my Mom and wave at everyone in the aisle. If the person would ignore him he would say hi to get their attention. He didn't understand when someone would turn away and ignore him. He just wanted to be friends with everyone he came in touch with.



When we meet new people Tim is the one that makes friends with them first. He just goes right up to the person and wants to talk. He is never afraid to try. He is willing to take the chance to make a friend and if the other person is not interested Tim will shrug his shoulders and then walk away. He is

too busy to worry about that person not wanting to be his friend, he is busy looking for another person to talk to.

Tim has a great sense of humor and he is very popular. He is always cracking jokes and trying to make everyone laugh. He is always in the middle of the conversations when we are with our friends and family.



He has a different reason for playing sports than I do too. I want to win, but Tim looks at it as a time to get together with his friends. He doesn't care whether he wins or loses just as long as he is having a good time. He plays basketball for the Special Olympics and he really

enjoys getting together with his team.

The reason why I want you to know this is because if you don't give him a chance you would never know what a nice kid he is. He and other kids with special needs are not here for us to make fun of, but to get an education just like us. They have a sense of humor, likes and dislikes, and feeling just like you and I.

Tim gets really upset when someone makes fun of him. It really

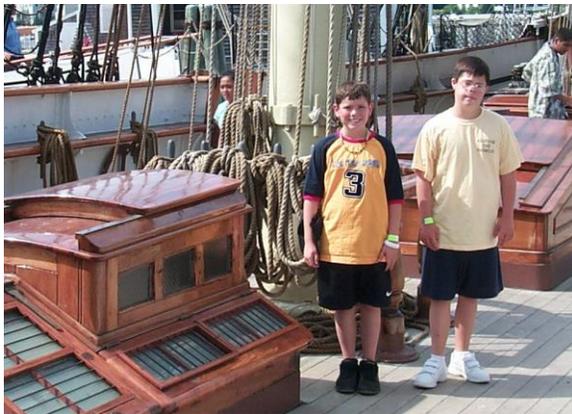


hurts his feelings. He just doesn't understand why someone would purposely want to be ignorant to him without knowing him. He is capable of expressing that feeling to others

but it still bothers him that someone would be mean to him.

I have been taught by my parents to treat Tim like a normal kid especially around my friends. That if my friends see how I treat him with respect then they will know that that is the appropriate way to be. It has taught me to be a leader and I find myself sticking up for others with disabilities at school. I don't understand why kids have to be so cruel to these kids when they have not done anything to deserve it.

I think having a brother with special needs has taught me a lot. Tim has taught me that if you really try hard you can achieve your goals. He has shown me how to be more patient and not to make fun of



others. That you really need to get to know someone before you can decide whether you want to be their friend. We are all different but it is the things that we have in common that make us who we are. It is a good thing to be different and to be yourself and that is what Tim does every day.

My brother has dreams just like everyone else. He wants to move into his own place, get a job and maybe get married. I believe if that is what he wants to do that he will achieve it. He does not let anything stand in his way. He has many ideas on what he wants to do when he grows up and I am sure that he will be able to get a job and make a difference.



My brother has inspired me to get involved. I am planning to volunteer my summers at Variety Club Camp.

This is a camp for special needs kids of all kinds. I want to continue to help the special needs kids that I come in contact with so that they know that there are people that want to be their friend. Getting involved in the community and interacting with all types of people will make a difference in my life as well as others.

Look around you and you will see all different kinds of people and all they are asking for is to be treated the same.



Dedicated to my brother Tim.