

A PARENT'S STORY

Teresa Cortez

Mom to Julian
Westview Parent 2011-2022

Dear Friend of Westview,

Two weeks after my three and a half year-old was diagnosed with “moderate” autism, I drove around Houston, Texas with a list of schools for children on the spectrum.

I needed help making such a decision and much more information about what to look for in a school, but Doctors could hardly explain what autism was, much less tell me what school was best for children like Julian.

As most parents of children with autism know, a school can make or break our kids. Julian was unhappy at his preschool and could sense he wasn't wanted there. The last straw was a morning drop-off when he used what few words he had to communicate his distress, “No, no. Home? Home?” We never went back.

I couldn't afford to make another mistake. I narrowed my list down to three schools, and what made Westview different was that it felt right, especially after the admissions director said with absolute sincerity, “He's perfect for Westview.”

Three weeks later my son was sitting still during circle time, drinking from a regular cup, eating with a spoon and fully potty-trained.

2011



2022

He smiled every morning at drop-off and every afternoon when I picked him up. He connected more and more words together with onsite speech therapy, and as his confidence grew, his anxiety and frustration melted away.

That first year at Westview, I noticed how much I'd missed the little things parents of neurotypical kids might take for granted. Like Thanksgiving turkeys made from my son's handprint, sweet Valentine's and Mother's Day cards with his proud messy signature at the bottom. I watched him perform in Christmas pageants and was thrilled at his excitement during Westview's annual Family Fun Day, Trunk-Or-Treat festivities, and ice cream socials.

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We were sharing beautiful experiences with the child we thought we'd lost, because Westview was dedicated to bridging gaps, academic and social, and celebrating in the simplest yet most profound ways.

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It felt like getting our life back, and our son. Westview made us feel safe, understood, and more than welcome.

We live in a world that often challenges our faith in people and institutions. But Westview has been a healing salve for that lack of trust. Their longevity is not only due to skilled teachers and carefully developed protocols. There's a consistency of care, an innate understanding and genuine love for our kiddos. And our children feel this warmth and protection.

I often say to those hearing about Westview for the first time, “If Westview were a religion, I'd sign right up.” Westview is more than just a school for our unique children. It's home.

Teresa