



FAMILY ACHIEVEMENT FOUNDATION

We can do this together

Happy New Year 2022!

The Journey Award

By Nancy McCue



One of the Family Achievement Foundation accomplishments I'm most proud of is the creation of the Journey Award. This award was created to honor the journey of my son Jack, who we lost to suicide in 2017, but it speaks to the heart and soul of the Foundation, and has and will honor the journeys of many more amazing people. Jack always cared more for others than he did for himself.

This award is meant to recognize parents who selflessly put others before themselves, and who face extraordinary challenges and handle them with grit and grace.

I recently had the opportunity to present the Foundation's first Journey Award to an amazing mom raising three beautiful children. She has faced some incredible challenges on her parenting journey and when I met her and her family for the first time, I felt nothing but strength and love coming from each of them. Her young son asked me why his mom was getting an award, to which I replied, "She just won Mom of the Year!" He looked at his mom like she was a superhero. And she is.

It was so meaningful for me to be able to present that mom and her family with a monetary award as well as a beautiful, handmade glass heart. But I believe what is most important, what she appreciated the most, was to be seen and to be valued. That's what people really want in this life. Someone took the time to nominate her, someone cherished her for who she is and what she does for others. Someone said, "I see you and you are wonderful." That's what gives us that warm feeling inside, that's what brings smiles to our faces, and yes, maybe some tears too. Continued on page 2.

**Visit and share
our website:**

www.familyachievementfoundation.org
to learn more about
resources, upcoming
programs, and our
dreams for the future!

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I would encourage you to look out to those around you, and in your own way honor the journey of another, to recognize with kindness someone amazing in your life. Maybe it's a handwritten note, maybe it's a hug, maybe it's a gift of your time. One of my favorite quotes by Robin Williams, "Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about. Be kind. Always." I hope we can become more like Jack, and Robin Williams, in how they saw goodness in others, and spread love and kindness.

If you have a special person in mind, nominate them for the upcoming Journey Award! We are currently accepting nominations with 3/31/22 submission deadline. Please see our [website](#) for official rules and application form.

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Questions about the foundation?

Please email info@familyachieve.org
 or call Sarah at 651.738.9878

UPCOMING EVENTS

Being Your Child's Best Advocate

Tuesday, February 1st
 6-7:30pm VIRTUAL



Karen Keenan,
 Executive Director
 Valley Friendship Club

Karen will be our February speaker for our parent education series. She is excited to share and facilitate conversation about ways to advocate for our children. She is the former chair of ConnectWC and a former Ted X Speaker "What if We Created a Community of Belonging". She is currently fostering social opportunities and friendship as Executive Director of Valley Friendship Club.

RSVP: Info@familyachieve.org to receive Zoom link

If you have a topic suggestion for a future parent education event, please email Sarah at info@familyachieve.org

UPCOMING EVENTS



Parent Support Group

Tuesday, February 15th 6:00-7:30pm

Join Angie Ellingson, Occupational Therapist, to discuss ideas for talking to your child about their diagnosis.

This will be a virtual event. Please RSVP to info@familyachieve.org to receive a zoom link.

Follow us on

Facebook:

[Family Achievement Foundation](#)

Amazon Smile:

Family Achievement Foundation is an Amazon Smile charitable organization. .5% of eligible purchases are donated to Family Achievement Foundation. Go to smile.amazon.com for more information.

Join us for our monthly Parent Support Group on the third Tuesday of the month

Virtual Valentine's Family Jam Night with Roots Music Therapy

Join us for an evening filled with music and love!

6:00-6:45pm on Tuesday, February 8th

RSVP to info@familyachieve.org to receive a zoom link

FUTURE FAMILY JAM DATES:
Every other 2nd Tuesday of the month

Free Parent Education Series: Estate Planning and Special Needs Trust



Amanda Hespen, an estate planning attorney at Scott + Hespen Law in St. Paul, will be speaking about the valuable advantages of creating a special needs trust for your child. There will also be time for Ms. Hespen to answer your questions.

- **Tuesday, May 3rd from 6:00-7:30pm**
- **RSVP to info@familyachieve.org**
- **Virtual**

Our communities are full of parents who give it their all to help their children! We look forward to making connections, building stronger resources, and supporting one another along the way. We simply cannot do it alone, but as our new motto says we can do this together!

Less Stress, More Joy: Managing Daily Routines

by Angie Ellingson, FAC Occupational Therapist

Has anyone been able to identify why the routines you have aren't working?

Consider underlying factors:

- Sensory/regulation
- Quality of sleep
- Hungry/hangry
- How was the school day?
- Are there loud siblings nearby?

Start by writing out the tasks that you want to have in the routine- even the smallest thing, write it down

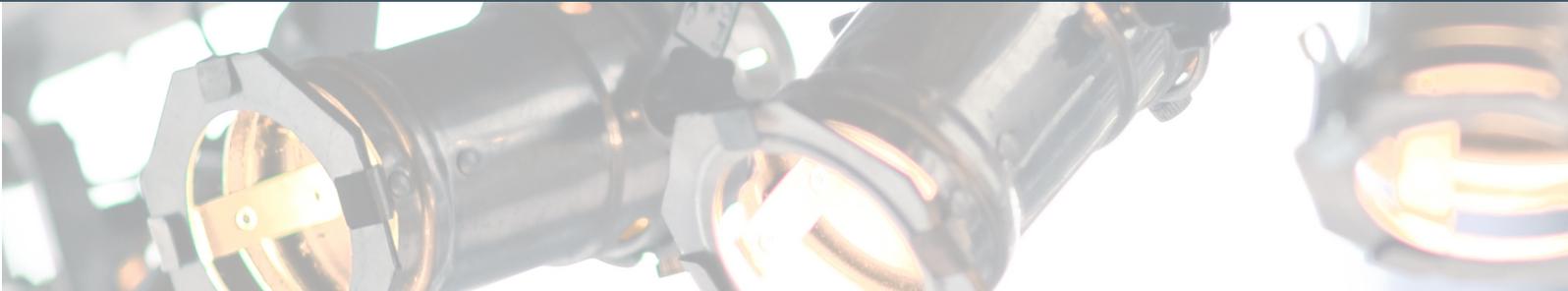
- Then put them in order, and assign a general time (give it more time than you think they need)
- Make a visual for the child, and go through it with them several times

Add in accommodations to address underlying factors

- If it's a loud sibling during homework time, find a different spot for homework.
- If it's a regulation issue, add sensory diet activities prior to homework or prior to getting into bed.
- Be realistic about what a child should be expected to do at different ages.
- Be consistent with the routine! You may have to help them more than you feel like you should.

Encourage and give them positive feedback about doing it themselves.

Spotlight on.....



Valley
Friendship
Club

The **Mission** of the Valley Friendship Club is to promote and provide safe, accessible social opportunities while fostering friendships. To this end, we aim to enhance community connections, empower club participants to strengthen important life skills, and create greater social independence.

VFC is located in Stillwater. To learn more:

<https://www.valleyfriendshipclub.org/>