

JESPY HOUSE CHANGED EVERYTHING, AND JESPY CENTER WILL DO THE SAME

Please allow me to add my voice to the ongoing conversation about the new JESPY Center project under consideration in South Orange. I cannot think of a more worthwhile endeavor nor a more appropriate place for this Center to be located.

I come from, perhaps, a slightly different perspective. I am not a South Orange native. My family was from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and in the 1960s and 1970s, understanding and resources for Developmentally Disabled persons was limited at best. My brother Lowell, who is now nearly 65, still managed to graduate from high school and spend a year at community college until his behavioral issues became more extreme. He was very unhappy and then, one day, my parents somehow learned about JESPY House. They went to visit, and he was accepted. Over the past thirty-four years, JESPY has seen Lowell through many ups and downs and yet they have always been remarkably patient and supportive. They approach each challenge as an opportunity and they have never, not once, been willing to lose hope that my brother would succeed within the supportive environment at JESPY.

Today, Lowell lives in a shared house, and it's been fantastic for him. He has had a life that has been way happier than it would have been otherwise, and he is healthier, emotionally and physically, than we could have dared hope. He goes to day programs; he goes out and about in town. He enjoys bowling. For his family, this is nothing short of miraculous. I am absolutely worry-free about him. My parents lived well into their senior years without having to worry about caring for a son with special needs. I cannot even begin to express how remarkable the people at JESPY are and what this organization has meant to my family.

When we learned about the new JESPY Center, we immediately signed on as donors to the GO BIG FOR JESPY campaign. For us, it is simply a matter of paying it forward. We know what JESPY has done for Lowell. We are thrilled to know that so many other individuals and their families are going to receive the same love and focused care that will be available in this glorious new facility. The JESPY Center reinforces JESPY's mission of advancing independence. From beautiful living spaces to counselor offices, this is what's needed. This is the JESPY vision. And it will change other's lives too.

I urge people to take a moment to think about what it might be like to have to worry about a child or sibling with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities without a place like JESPY House to help people live their best lives. I can tell you from personal experience that I am beyond grateful that JESPY exists. I am thrilled they are looking to provide ever better services for their current clients and future clients who need their help. I unequivocally endorse this exceptional project.

Lisa Beittel