Ask Your Questions

Please use your note card for any questions that you would like to ask and then pass the card to Rebecca Buhner. Questions will be addressed at the end of the program.
Dedication

• This program is dedicated to both Michael and his second wraparound facilitator, Marta Stamwitz, who worked with him for three years, assisted in identifying committed providers, and built upon family strengths.
• Michael told Marta that she was like a mother to him. He misses her greatly but promised her to work with Jamie and Larry.

Family is Everything!

Michael’s world revolves around his older brother Andrew and younger brother Brandon. Outside of Michael’s time in residential treatment, they have never lived apart. Some tried to suggest that they would be better off with Michael out of the home.
Life in Foster Care

From birth, foster mommy Nancy Baldwin provided loving care for 4 years in her Anderson home until Michael’s adoption.

His maladaptive behaviors began at age 2.

Multiple Diagnoses

Michael was diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome at the age of three due to the confirmation of his birthmother’s use of alcohol during pregnancy. All five of siblings also have FAS.

Michael was additionally diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder at the age nine when he completely fell apart at school, became violent in the classroom, and failed to respond to redirection or intervention.
Extended Family

Michael has five biological siblings, the two youngest were adopted by other families.

Michael also has two older adoptive brothers who now live in Washington, Indiana near their birth family.

Served in the Community

Home consistently provides the best care. Wraparound services have kept Michael in the home.

Two residential stays at the Midwest Center in Kouts and Lutherwood in Indianapolis actually increased mental health symptoms.

15 hospitalizations became expensive respite with surprising consequences.
Animals – Pet Therapy

Michael has always bonded well with animals and enjoys their unconditional love.

His dog Halli and cat Angel provide ongoing comfort and expect nothing in return.

Medication

Michael sees Dr. Uma Kalapatapu at the Raj Clinics monthly. Finding a psychiatrist who takes Medicaid hasn’t been easy. Current meds:

• Lithium – the key
• Intuniv
• Lamictal
• Invega

Kidney function is being closely monitored.
Involvement on the Washington Township Special Olympics team has helped Michael accept his disability and develop a growing circle of social contacts.

Participation can last a lifetime.

Nothing is more important in Michael’s life than his family. He knows that his father and siblings will always provide assistance and stand with him.
Executive Functioning

Michael struggles daily with the following:

• Initiating tasks
• Inhibiting behaviors
• Transitioning between activities
• Using his working memory
• Organizing

• Full Scale IQ - 59

Crisis Plan – Dynamic Duo

The goal within the home is keeping everyone safe at all times and de-escalating behaviors without incident.

Andrew and Brandon take their roles very seriously.
Better than a Therapist

Brandon has learned to help when asked rather than add to Michael’s escalation. This process has taken years to develop. Michael adores Brandon who oftentimes is the only person able to squash his brother’s negative outlook before it leads to physical aggression.

The Peace Maker

Andrew is the family peace maker and will always try to reason with Michael, even when he is not willing to hear the message. Michael wants to be more like Andrew and is making progress in his social skills.
Music

Todd Hawks
Music Teacher
Charles A. Tindley Accelerated School

3 years at school

Allowing Michael to pursue his love of singing in an environment that is appropriate

Strengths & Challenges

Jamie Thomas
Habilitator

1.5 years on team

Helping Michael understand and appreciate the natural supports within his family

Processing ongoing behavior
**School Interventions**

**Marcel Bonds**  
Paraprofessional  
“Michael’s external brain at school”  
3 years at school  
Providing structured and consistent one-on-one support at school

**Hands-On Habilitation**

**Larry Brunson**  
Habilitator  
1.5 years on team  
Working with Michael in community and volunteer settings  
Improving fitness and maintaining weight
IEP: A Work in Progress

Penny Gregory
Exceptional Learner Coordinator, Charles A. Tindley Accelerated School

3 years at school
Adjusting Michael’s schedule based upon his needs and running interference

All Hands on Deck

Nakia Douglas
Director of Exceptional Learners, Charles A. Tindley Accelerated School

6 years at school
Creatively using all available school resources to find meaningful instruction through age 21.
Vocational Education

Tom Peterson
Audrey's Place Furniture
Uncle for 15 years
Supporting Michael in a work environment and coaching him on interpersonal interaction and job readiness

Audrey's Place Furniture, 3210 E. 10th Street

Guardianship

Stasia Demos Mills
Attorney
8 months
Serving as legal counsel for Michael's guardianship and helping him through the process with care

www.demosmillslaw.com
Questions from Audience

Thank you
to Rebecca Buhner
for collecting questions
and sorting them.

To Learn More

Adopting Faith:
A Father’s Unconditional Love

by D. Craig Peterson

A memoir of his fifteen year journey raising six children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Reactive Attachment Disorder, ADHD, Bipolar Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder