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## – Extraordinary Gifts –

When my son, Dylan was about three years old I had the privilege of meeting Judith Snow, a self-advocate from Canada. Judith spoke about giftedness and described the ordinary gifts many people have, like walking, talking, doing math, etc. She noted that some people may not have those ordinary gifts, but they may have *extraordinary* gifts, like the ability to trust others or the gift of persistence. I began reflecting about the concept of giftedness and about Dylan's extraordinary gifts.

Soon after that evening with Judith Snow, we had a family meeting. My husband and I, along with our daughter, older son, and Dylan, gathered in the living room to talk about all of our gifts. We also created a list of Dylan's gifts that went beyond the new skills he was trying to learn and use—a list not only for us to keep in the forefront of our minds, but also for others who would be in his life as he grew. Some of Dylan's gifts we listed that night were: a sense of humor, honesty, gratitude, unconditional love, and the ability to demonstrate the importance of belonging. As Dylan has grown, we've added other gifts to the list: the ability to turn his dreams into reality. He sets goals, talks about them, describes what it will look like when he reaches his goals, *feels* the accomplishment before it happens, totally believes it will happen, and does not waiver in his pursuit of his dreams. What a different world this would be if everyone had this gift!

In the midst of this holiday season as we buy presents for each other, let's stop and reflect on the extraordinary gifts our children or our students *already* possess. Make of list of those gifts, place it inside a box with bright, shiny paper, and share it with others. This may be the most precious gift ever! Click [here](#) to find a gift box outline you can copy and use (see Extraordinary Gifts on Resource page of my website).

**Identify your vision:** How can a child's extraordinary gifts help create a vibrant community?

**Use your voice:** Discuss concept of giftedness with other families, colleagues, and decision makers.

**Work together:** Explore ways to create new beliefs by focusing on the gifts of people who have been excluded or marginalized because of their perceived "deficits."

Please let me know if you're interested in one of my presentations and/or customized consulting and coaching.

What we anticipate, determines what we find!  
Charmaine Thaner