

of the class. The teacher said that she became concerned when it was Justin's turn; there he stood at the front of the class with no written material prepared. He proceeded to tell the class that he had chosen to talk about his sister, her life and what his family's dreams were for her. He spoke about the label society had given her, about her struggles, her accomplishments and about how she was just like the other students. She liked to skate, watch videos, go to school, and play with her friends, and her favourite singer was Michael Jackson. Justin concluded by telling the class that he did not need to write down on paper or prepare beforehand what he knew was right because it came naturally from his heart. I was told that this presentation not only moved the entire classroom to tears, including the teacher, but that it was also the most educational presentation the teacher had ever heard.

June came and the school year was winding down when the news came: our family was being transferred to Oromocto, New Brunswick. It sounded like the other end of the earth. What was to become of Mandy and her education?

With just two days left in the school year and only days before we left for our new home, the school principal called and asked my husband and I to meet with him the next day. Not knowing what it was all about, and feeling both apprehensive and curious, we went to the school.

Upon our arrival, we were escorted into a crowded board room filled with people — teachers and administrators who had been directly involved with Mandy, and other teachers whose only experience had been to say hi to her in the halls. To our surprise, they all thanked my husband and I for giving *them* the opportunity to have Mandy at their school. They told us how sorry they were to see us leave and that they wished we were staying in Ottawa for at least three more years. They added that they hoped Mandy had learned as much from them as they had learned from her.

It was a moment I will never forget. It seized my beliefs; I made an added commitment to our family's direction. I later