

MESSAGE FROM NAOMI NADATA, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

I'd Like to Thank...

Have you ever noticed what people say when they only have thirty seconds after being presented with an award? Many look back and thank a person in their past who believed in them and supported their hopes and dreams.

Children with learning disabilities need extra nurturing. Despite normal intelligence, they often have little confidence, because they persistently experience failure in school and even at home. As a result, they conclude that there is safety in not doing, not trying, not taking chances. They often carry a heavy burden of loneliness, believing that they are the only ones in the world who struggle so hard, yet fail so often. Some give up entirely.

All it takes is one person to change the entire course of a child's life. When writing their autobiographies, many of our older CAHAL students have cited the important role of a teacher, parent, friend, or other relative in helping them realize their potential. What these mentors have in common is that they recognize that the child may learn differently, but is just as talented and capable as other children. They provide time, energy, and unconditional love. They pinpoint the strategies that allow the children to define themselves by what they can do, rather than what they can't. This attention fuels the drive to succeed.

You can become that special individual for a child with learning disabilities. It's easier than you think. The long-term outcome opens so many new doors. When a child feels confident, everything becomes possible. Instead of things happening to him, he can make things happen *for him*. Ultimately, he will thank you.