

As Natasha approaches the end of her time at CALO I find myself feeling proud to be able to say that we are part of the CALO family and I can tell you that you will have two advocates should we discover another family who is looking for help for a child struggling with attachment issues. You really are building a much needed, quality program.

*Hi Landon,*

*It seems like after every parent retreat that I attend I feel a need to drop you a line. This retreat is no different except that most of the comments I want to share have nothing to do with the retreat (even though it was another powerful, wonderful experience for Natasha and I), but with all the events and activities that I got to participate in while being on campus Wednesday. I wanted to tell you that I was so impressed with what I saw while being able to observe a student council meeting. I can't believe that I was fortunate enough to be at CALO during one of these meetings and then to be allowed to attend as Natasha's parent. Natasha does not share much detail of her daily life with me and even when I ask specifically about student council, she struggles to come up with much to share. I was so pleased to experience the level of respect that filled the conference room during the meeting. I know I should not have been surprised by this because high levels of respect have always flowed from the top down throughout all CALO activities that I have been lucky enough to attend. I found it hard to keep my composure while the students discussed the self-harm recommendation. This issue is one that is close to my heart and to hear the kids really think through the issue and be willing to share their personal experience was powerful for me. I will be curious to see what decisions are made on this recommendation down the road. I just really wanted to thank CALO once again for offering a real student council experience to our kids and frankly, at least some of the issues that are discussed in the CALO student council are far bigger than those of a regular student council like what should be the homecoming theme or what colors should be used for the prom. I know that Natasha never would have been elected to student council at her high school and if she had been elected earlier to the CALO student council, she never would have spoken up and shared her thoughts. I was so proud to see her speak up on several occasions. She seemed to speak for herself at some points and as the Robin's girl's team representative at other points. From a parent's perspective, that was wonderful. I know that she can now speak up because all the staff in attendance have treated her with care and respect over the long haul and she has now experienced that she will not be shot down just for sharing her ideas. What a gift to a child who still, after all this time struggles to believe that she has value as a human being! Thank you to all involved. Just by a fluke of timing, you were able to gift a proud mom too! Very soon now, another student will be able to represent the Robin's girl's team and I hope their experience will be as positive as Natasha's has been.*

*Wednesday was quite the day for me because I had no idea that I would also be on campus to witness the ground breaking ceremony for the new gym, school and canine facilities. I was so tickled to see the kids get to participate in the event by doing the fly ball competition and I again, had a hard time keeping my composure as I listened to the kids share their stories. It is wonderful to see CALO moving in this direction and I know that Natasha would have loved to have regular access to a real gym during her time at CALO. Perhaps somewhere down the road Natasha and I will be able to return to CALO*

*to see how this new facility and the added living quarters turned out. These are exciting times for you and the other CALO founders as you see your dream really take flight and grow, but these are also exiting times for the CALO family at large and I am so pleased to be part of that family. As Natasha approaches the end of her time at CALO I find myself feeling proud to be able to say that we are part of the CALO family and I can tell you that you will have two advocates should we discover another family who is looking for help for a child struggling with attachment issues. You really are building a much needed, quality program.*

*Mary*