



My son, Andrew, is a 13 year-old with Down Syndrome. He has three siblings, including his twin sister Gretchen. Many people underestimate Andrew's abilities because he is non-verbal. However, there is definitely strong willed and desires to be active.

He started Balance Summer Rec program so many years ago, I don't recall exactly when. We have struggled to find programs that know how to best handle the sometimes unpleasant behavior that Andrew shows when he is unhappy with a situation. As he gets older and bigger, the melt-downs have become bigger too.

This summer however, was the best one yet for Andrew. The staff and volunteers worked very closely with me to troubleshoot the hiccups. After one particular rough day early in the session, I was not sure things were going to work out. However, the amount of compassion and understanding from Balance was overwhelming. Everyone assured me they were going to find something that worked for Andrew. They definitely made me feel like they wanted Andrew to be in the program - despite the behavior he had just displayed. In a world full of judgement and pressure, this was so refreshing. We tried several tactics and they worked, improving Andrew's behavior! Andrew was able to enjoy the remaining field trips and made us all so proud.

Most importantly, he was proud of himself. Andrew had a program that he could enjoy and belong, without judgement. He was proud of himself and had a great time. We are definitely looking forward to more success in Summer of 2020!

- Wendy Heintz