

My name is Aaron Ruderman and my daughter Carly is in her first year in the TerpsEXCEED program at the University of Maryland.

Carly has lived her entire life in Prince George's County and Montgomery County, MD, living within a 25 minute commute to the College Park campus. It has been Carly's dream to attend the University of Maryland since she was a little girl.

My wife, Marci, and I, and Carly's grandparents, and multiple aunts and uncles all graduated from the University of Maryland. Carly's sister Danielle graduates from Maryland this semester.

Marci and I were both thrilled and terrified when Carly was accepted into the program. We knew the opportunity would be amazing. There is nothing quite like it offered elsewhere in Maryland. However we were filled with anxiety - would Carly be safe? How will she navigate around a busy campus by herself? Will she be able to integrate with students and keep up in the classes?

I can honestly and accurately say TerpsEXCEED has been a life changing experience for Carly. Carly has fully integrated into college life and participates in a wide ranging list of on campus activities. She lives

independently with a roommate in a dorm. She meets friends for meals at the campus dining halls, Stamp Union, and other restaurants on campus. Carly participates in several organizations related to her faith, club cheer, intramural sports, and Best Buddies to name a few. Carly loves her classes and she receives feedback from professors that they love having her in their classes.

Carly enthusiastically attends the Maryland soccer games, football games, and basketball games. She is a Maryland superfan. Next time you go to a Maryland basketball game you are sure to see Carly on the big scoreboard screen jumping and cheering in her over the top Maryland attire. She gets almost as much camera time as University of Maryland Super alum ESPN's Scott Van Pelt.

Experiencing college and life on campus is a huge learning opportunity for any young person. For those like Carly with a developmental or intellectual disability, TerpsEXCEED opens up multiple opportunities to build confidence, promote independence, and fully participate in the campus communities and activities they choose.

The Maryland disability community needs programs like Terps Exceed. Vote YES for HB0458 for the benefit of all

of our children with developmental and / or intellectual disabilities.