

**Name: Matthew Na**

**Gender: Male**

**Date of Birth: November 18, 1999 (24 years old)**

**Address: 9956 Oak Lea Court, Ellicott City, MD 21042**

**Email: narfamily4@verizon.net**

**Phone: 443-386-2467**

**Diagnosis: Autism**

**Service: DDA Self-Directed Services (SDS)**

### **Background & Challenges Before SDS (Traditional Services):**

For **two years**, Matthew was placed in a **traditional service model** that **failed to meet his needs**, leading to **severe behavioral and emotional struggles**:

- **Extreme difficulty with transitions**—when moving from **middle to high school**, his behaviors became so intense that the entire school had to be evacuated.
- **Severe sensory sensitivities**, including an **inability to tolerate babies crying, high-pitched noises, and arguments**, often leading to **self-injury and aggression toward others**.
- **His mother was the primary victim**, frequently experiencing **physical aggression** when he was overwhelmed.
- **Finding a service provider was difficult**, and **the agencies that were available did not provide appropriate accommodations**.
- **Large group settings were overwhelming**, but **agency staff failed to intervene effectively**.
- **Daily emotional meltdowns at home**, lasting over an hour, with **screaming, crying, and self-harming behaviors**.
- **Increased use of medication for depression**, but even with higher doses, his mental health did not improve.

### **Improvements After SDS (Personalized 1:1 Support):**

With **SDS**, Matthew finally received **the tailored care he needed**, leading to **life-changing improvements**:

- **Mood stabilization**—he now has **more happy and balanced days**.
- **Reduced medication reliance**—despite **lowering his depression medication dosage**, his mood remains **stable**.

- **Eliminated aggression toward his mother**, marking a major behavioral breakthrough.
- **Work Possibility in Campus Program participation**, helping him **develop job-related skills and build social connections**.
- **Community engagement**—volunteering at the **public school library and Spirit Club**, significantly improving his **social confidence and communication skills**.
- **His quality of life has dramatically improved**, thanks to **SDS giving him control and choice over his daily routine**.

#### **Why SDS Matters:**

- **Provides essential individualized support**, addressing **behavioral, emotional, and sensory challenges**.
- **Prevents regression and ensures continued progress in social and vocational skills**.
- **Offers the flexibility and personal care necessary** to help individuals like Matthew thrive.

#### **Call to Action:**

**Governor Wes Moore's proposed budget cuts to Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) put individuals like Matthew at serious risk.** Reduced funding would:

- **Jeopardize his care hours**, threatening his **behavioral and emotional stability**.
- **Undo the incredible improvements** he has made in **self-regulation, mood, and social engagement**.
- **Force families into unsuitable, ineffective programs** that **previously failed them**.

I urge you to **protect and prioritize SDS funding** within **HCBS programs**. Without it, **families like ours will face unnecessary hardship, and Matthew's well-being will be jeopardized**. Please ensure that individuals like Matthew continue to thrive through the support of SDS.