

To whom it may concern,

My name is Tina Kostad and I am the mother of 3 adult children, 2 grandsons and a 10-year-old little boy who has FASD. At this point we do not know if he'll ever live on his own and although the chances are very slim, we will continue working as hard as we can to make his world the best it can be.

When Jaxson came into our lives, we didn't know how exposure would affect him and we did not care. We saw a beautiful little boy who needed love, and we so needed him. He went through a few long weeks of miserable withdrawals. It was heartbreaking to watch, but we had no idea the what the future held for him or us.

2 ½ years later, he was with us since birth, his tummy mom had become sober and asked us to officially adopt him. It was a wonderful day for everyone and a month after his 3rd birthday he became a Kostad! And the same week we finalized the sale of our home to pay for his adoption and expenses. It was meant to be.

Jaxson has struggled in so many areas. We have had his pediatrician voice that he has the most extreme ADHD he's ever seen. He has multiple diagnosis's including FASD and Autism level 2. He has a sleep disorder, sensory disorder, lacks impulse control and learning disability. When his meds are working the true little boy can be seen. He's got so much love and kindness. But unfortunately, he metabolizes them very quickly making his daily life a huge struggle.

I have tried to hold down even a part time job from home but unfortunately, I end up having to decide to quit to provide for Jaxson. We tried school last year and after 3 days we realized this would not be a possibility due to his needs therefore I've home-schooled him for the past 4years. You can imagine the financial drain that is on a family with a child who has special needs. And once again we may have to choose to lose the home, we purchased 4 years ago to make sure we can provide for his needs and appointments.

Our whole life is completely different. We've attended many classes to learn how to parent a child with a disability like this, we plan our whole day on what will help Jaxson best succeed. Such as we wake up at 5, sometimes we don't sleep because Jaxson can't sleep and needs to be closely watched all night long and day. We don't go to many public events

that will overwhelm him. This includes how we do our normal shopping. We don't spend much time with friends and family as it's hard for others to understand him. Going out for anything after 5 is almost never done because this is the time his meds wear off and he's unable to handle his surroundings.

May I add the most important thing that has happened since this beautiful boy came into our lives? He has taught us to be better people. We never judge a child who is struggling in a store or in public as we know they are doing their best. We know all about invisible disabilities. We know how to parent in more than one way. We know unconditional love. Life would never be this great without him in our lives and we thank every day, even the hardest days, that we were trusted to make his life better. He's given us more than we can ever give him.

His tummy mom is now pregnant with her 4th child and after seeing that drinking while pregnant has affected her last 2 children, especially Jaxson, she has been alcohol free this pregnancy. She hurts when she sees how her 2 little boys struggle but is so proud that she has overcome and will finally be able to give this baby a life without FASD. She NEVER wanted any of her children to suffer like this. She was uneducated. She is selfless and cared more about her children than the pain of letting others raise them. She has so much love and we are so proud of her.

Education is crucial for the future of our country. We need to give future moms the knowledge of the possible effects of any alcohol consumption during pregnancy. They deserve it, the children deserve it, as does everyone. FASD effects EVERYONE. We need to do better for our children, our state, and our country. It does start with one person. We can be that person.

I could go on and on about how FASD effects our son, our family, you, etc. but I've taken up so much of your time already. I appreciate you learning about our wonderful boy and how you can help out families like ours. And just like Jaxson, be the change for the better.

Sincerely,

Tina L. Kostad

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