As summer neared its end, a new beginning would be started by Cathy Staggers and her family. Cathy's daughter, Anna Marie had just been diagnosed with William’s Syndrome. Her call came into the Southwest Regional Office. Cathy was looking for answers, someone to share her feelings with, and some hope for her daughter's future. Peer supporter Audrey Zelanko agreed to support Cathy. The kinship started off right away as there just happen to be a William’s Syndrome regional get together within the next few weeks. Audrey and Cathy not only spoke on the phone – but were able to meet. Cathy tells us “Seeing Carly gives me hope for Anna”. Carly and little Anna Marie formed their own little bond as you can see in their adorable picture. Cathy tells us that talking to her Peer Supporter, Audrey was so helpful and meeting Carly was very very helpful. She said that there is an “unspoken language you share when your children have the same diagnosis. You don’t have to explain all the medical details and such – you can get right to the issue. There is so much compassion and understanding – you really don’t need to say a lot”. Cathy tells us that Audrey was able to tell her about all the new developments as well as about a Study in Kentucky that Cathy and Anna Marie are now enrolled in.

Audrey tells us that Cathy is so open and so receptive to information and suggestions. She is thrilled that Cathy took the information about the study and the specialist as that doctor develops a report to give to the family that can help them in the future for their learning style in school. Audrey states that when you have a child with something like William’s Syndrome that is so rare, you form an automatic kinship and understanding. Audrey said it is so nice to be able to meet those people you connect to in person. Audrey also talked about how there is so much on the internet and given to newly diagnosed families that while it has facts – it does not talk about the range of children or your child. When you find all that information – you see it – but wonder where your child fits into the picture. When you talk to another family, you can see the range and potential and gain hope.

Just recently, this all came full circle when Cathy was asked to mentor another newly diagnosed family. Now she can take the kinship and knowledge that Audrey graciously shared with her and share it with another. As a Parent to Parent Coordinator, I feel honored to be a little part in the circle that brings hope to newly diagnosed families.