



“There I stood, shell-shocked, in the middle of a crowded expo wondering how on earth I ended up in this place. There must be some mistake. I don't belong here. After all, my child was just "quirky" and brought her own brand of "awesomeness" to the world. Right? "She'll catch up", I thought, "Please keep your alphabet soup of labels---- we won't be needing them."

Still weary from yet another sleepless night attempting to become an expert in Special Education Law, Occupational Therapy, Sensory Integration, Speech Language Pathology, IEP Preparation, and other "Spectrum Mom Ninja Skills", I made my way over to Carmen at the Parent-to-Parent table and filled out an interest card. Little did I know the impact this one act would have on our lives---It was to become the lifeline I hadn't yet realized that I so desperately needed on a journey I was still finding so difficult to navigate.

Within a very short time, Carmen matched me with two women who, in their own ways, would help to anchor me to a community of what I refer to as "Warrior Moms"---Moms who, despite their own family challenges, have garnered enough strength and compassion to extend their hands and their hearts in order to empower other moms still new to this journey. Unless one has walked this harrowing path fraught with pitfalls and uncertainty, one will never fully grasp what a blessing it is to have people who "get it" to walk alongside you through the darkness. Side by side, they light the path paved by parents who have realized that there is value in the comfort that can only be found in a community of shared grief, fear, and, yes, even the occasional glimmer of hope and sparkle of joy!

I wish to express my sincerest gratitude to all those involved with Parent-to-Parent for the support that you continue to provide to families at the time of our greatest need. Each "match" that you make is a life that otherwise may not have been touched, impacting more lives than you will ever realize.”

Gratefully,

Tricia Yohe; Former Frazzled Mom turned Warrior Mom

