

#ThinkABILITY

AUSTIN CHRISTIAN

Over 13 years ago, my son Austin was diagnosed with Autism. As most parents, I was devastated and confused. My quest for information started with Families Helping Families. I was met with kindness and compassion, started on a journey of learning, and given hope for the first time.

Austin is now 16 years old and a junior at the Advanced Studies Academy Thomas Jefferson High School on the west bank of New Orleans. Students at the academy work one grade level above in honors classes. Despite his autism, he has maintained a 3.0 average in his classes.

What makes Austin so amazing is his drive. He never walks away from a challenge! In fact, he works extra hard to achieve his goals. He is a member of the Jaguar football team, basketball team, and track teams. He is also a member of the Jaguar band and will be attending a trip to Florida this spring to perform. He is of Catholic faith and will be making his confirmation later this year.

Austin had the privilege of speaking at an Autism Walk held at Southeastern University. During this speech, he encouraged attendees to never give up on the people that they love despite any issues they may face. He shared that his motto is to “always push on, not back.”



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Austin was recently interviewed by, Sean Frazende, a Sports Reporter at Fox 8 Sports regarding his participation in sports at school and his drive to succeed. The interview was heartwarming as it was evident that he has touched many lives in his quest for independence. During this interview, his former elementary school teacher and principal were present to cheer him on, as well as his current support team which includes his high school principal Mr. Vincent and his special education teacher and Coach, Kevin Kelly.

I am very grateful for the support provided from Families Helping Families. They helped me realize that all things are possible. They taught me how to advocate for my son's needs. I credit his success to the support and information that they provided. This support allowed me to remain strong which enabled me to help him. Thanks, Families Helping Families!!!

To see Austin's interview with Fox 8 Sports visit

<http://www.fox8live.com/story/33749920/local-prep-football-player-overcomes-unique-obstacle>



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#Think**ABILITY** is a month long social media campaign to celebrate the accomplishments of individuals with disabilities. The campaign is coordinated by Families Helping Families of Jefferson and held annually during the month of **March**. Learn more about it at <http://fhfjefferson.org/whats-going-on/special-events/thinkability>

Changing Lives. Every Day.