

## **Tehiyah Day School 4<sup>th</sup> grade class interview with Sarah Cartan on 11/17/2010**

**Ruth: Our 4<sup>th</sup> grade class has been studying different learning abilities and also learning disabilities. As part of our conversation, we have studied about Autism. Today Sarah Cartan has to come and talk with us about what it is like to be a person with Autism. Sarah, would you say a few things first and then the students will ask some questions?**

Sarah: When I first found out that I am Autistic I was confused because I didn't know what that was. I knew I was different than other kids. For one thing, I was the only kid in pre-school wearing glasses. Also, the other kids always wanted to play together and I liked being alone. When I was little my aide always tried to get me to play with other kids, but I wanted to be alone. It drove me crazy. At least now my aides are nicer.

Q: How did you find out that you had autism?

A: As a baby I used to stare out into space and I lost my speech. So then I had some tests.

Q: How did they explain it to you?

A: They said it is a learning disability that affects how I learn. They knew I was smart because I could read in pre-school, but they said other things would be hard.

Q: How do you feel about having Autism?

A: I like who I am. Besides, if I didn't have autism I might not be here. I might not have met any of you.

Q: What do you like to do at recess?

A: Today I'm going to the book fair. Usually I like to read.

Q: Do you think Autism helps you?

A: I like being different. Besides, no two people are the same.

Q: What sort of help do you get besides at school?

A: I have music therapy. It used to be piano but now its voice. Also I have speech therapy.

Q: If you could take a pill to make your autism go away would you?

A: No thanks.

Q: What are your feelings when you want to be with friends or when you want to be alone?

A: When I'm sad or tired I want to be alone.

Q: Do you feel better some days?

A: Yes. I have mood swings and some days are better

Q: Do you have a hobby?

A: Video Games

Q: What do you plan to do when you get older?

A: I don't know, but I want to work with animals. I really love animals.

Q: Do you feel completely different than other kids or just somewhat different?

A: Somewhat. I'm still a kid. I'm the same generation as you. Autism is just another part of me.

Q: Are you picked on at school?

A: I'm not picked on at school. But I sometimes get annoyed by bossy parents.

Q: Do you like it when you are in your own world?

A: Yes. <she does a pantomime of a pokemon battle to show how engaging her world is>

Q: Are you showing the class about your own world?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you like to draw?

A: Yes. I am good at drawing pokemon characters.

Q: Are you ever teased about liking things that younger kids like?

A: No. Not teased. I still lie to watch PBS Kids shows sometimes. But my Dad doesn't like it when I watch them.

Q: Do you like to be touched?

A: I like hugs but kisses from humans are disgusting.

Q: We read a book called All Cats Have Aspergers. Do you know it and what do you think about it?

A: Yes I read it. I liked it. The cats are soooooooooo cuuuuuuuuuute.

Q: Do you like sports?

A: Only on the Wi. I like to do them on the Wi.

Q: Do you have Autism or Aspergers?

A: Autism only.

Q: Do you like to act?

A: Yes. I am trying out for the part of Miriam in the Middle School musical.

Q: Do you like to draw with a partner or alone?

A: I would choose to draw with a partner. Then I could see what they draw.

Q: What is your favorite color?

A: Pink and purple

Q: What do you like to eat?

A: Turkey and chicken hot dogs. I really love Chocolate Cake.

Q: Do you like to write or type?

A: Typing is better.

Q: Do you like candy?

A: My favorites are Kit Kat, Kisses and lollipops

Q: Do you like things always to be the same?

A: I like doing things over and over, but sometimes I like variety.

Q: If you could be in another grade would you want to be older?

A: Sometimes I want to be younger because Middle School is so much work.

Q: Do you have a good memory?

A: Yes.

Q: What is your favorite toy?

A: I have a stuffed eagle that I've had since I was a baby. My grandmother gave it to me.

Q: What is your favorite book?

A: Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Pokemon and I love the Warriors series.

Q: How old are you?

A: I'm 11.

Q: Would you rather see the movie or read the book?

A: It depends on the movie or book.

Q: Would you prefer Small or Big?

A: Big for chocolate cake. Small for homework

Q: As you learned what autism is, how did you feel?

A: I don't remember how I felt. I think it affected my parents more than me.

Q: Do you like to dance?

A: Yes but it has to be good music.

Q: What music do you like?

A: Chipmunk music.

Q: What is your favorite part of school?

A: Summer vacation.

Q: What did you do in the summer?

A: We went to Alaska.

Q: In class would you rather stand up or sit down?

A: Lie down. I don't like to stand during class. Sit or lie down.

Q: What else do you want to tell these students that they may not have asked?

A: Don't be afraid to say if you have a learning disability. Don't feel ashamed. If you have a learning disability you can still be smart.