

# The CIDSO News

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## *"A Brighter Tomorrow"*

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## *Come Sit By Me*

*by Kathy Smallwood*

Troy Daniels delivered a knockout speech during his 2002 high school graduation ceremonies at Northfield Middle High School in Northfield, Vermont, USA, which so touched the hearts of the listeners that their response raised the roof and brought them to their feet.

Inspiration like that cannot be contained, and news of Daniels' speech traveled as far away as Australia, where the country's Special Olympics Program adopted a line from the speech, "come sit by me," as buzzwords for its Program. It has become such a popular catchphrase for acceptance and inclusion that the Program went so far as to have a pin made bearing those

words. Special Olympics Australia athletes who attended the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Dublin, Ireland, brought a batch of the pins to give to their peers from around the world. The phrase, "come sit by me," seems to resonate with everyone who hears it—like a philosophy of life summed up in four words.

Since graduating from high school, Daniels still maintains his ties. He is the school's team manager for the football hockey and baseball teams. Somehow he fits that into his schedule between two jobs: working at a neighborhood convenient store and serving food to the residents of a senior care center.

Recently, Daniels has had to cook and clean since moving from his parents' home into his own apartment.

Following is Daniels' speech which has made an impact halfway around the world and is still creating a stir in the hearts and minds of people.

### **Inclusion is Not a Place; it is a Feeling**

#### ***Troy Daniels Senior Speech, May 2002***

"My name is Troy Daniels, but my friends call me TD. I have Down syndrome. Because my heart is bad, I use a wheel chair. I do not speak very well and sometimes I use Libby [a speech device].

"I am person with disabilities and when I say 'my friends' I mean friends, real friends just like everyone else, I have friends. Most of you think all people have friends, but for people with disabilities friends are not always real. I want you to know why I have friends.

"Not too long ago, people with disabilities could not go to school with other kids. They had to go to 'special schools.' They could not have real friends. They call people like me 'retard.' That breaks my heart.

"When I came to school, there is law that says all kids go to school in the place

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## *Inclusion is a Feeling (Continued)*

they live. I started school right here in Northfield with all the senior class. We were little kids together. The law says that I can come to school, but no law can make me have friends. "But then some kids started to think that I was okay, first it was just one or two kids who were nice to me. They found out that I cared about them and I loved my school. I told them I want to have real friends. Others started to hang out with me, and they found out we could be friends. We started to learn together that in some ways we were different but in some ways we were the same. They called me friend and made sure that I was in everything at school. I cared about them and they cared about me.

"I want all people to know and to see that these students I call my friends are the real teachers of life. They are showing you how it should be. They are the teachers for all of you to follow their lead.

"Yes, I am a person with a disability. The law says that I am included, but it is my friends who say... 'TD, come sit by me.'"

### *Bowling*

We are bowling again! Plan on joining us on Feb. 23 from 2-4 p.m. at Pheasant Lanes on Hershey. CIDSO will pick up the bowling, shoe rental, and drinks. Let me know if you are planning on attending so I can be sure to have the correct number of lanes reserved. I am also reserving the ball ramp and lane bumpers so we should be set for a good time.

### *Oh What Fun...*

The Christmas Party was a wonderful time. Two large bags of toys and a truck bigger than my child were donated to Toys For Tots by generous CIDSO families. Special thanks to Judy Bates for providing great food and to Brenda Harms for the fun ornament crafts and cookie decorating. Thanks to Janet Fischer for playing the piano and enduring our attempts at singing. If anyone happens to see Santa around, can you let him know we appreciate him stopping by our party, especially during his busy season.

### *Keeping Track by Sheila Hebein*

For more than 25 years I have heard from parents that their child with Down syndrome is a long distance runner or an escape artist. More and more products are coming on the market utilizing GPS systems that will help us to keep track of our children and adults. Here are two that you might want to check out:

**GPS Sneakers:** Isaac Daniel is a company that manufactures sneakers with a GPS tracking device. They have sneakers for men and women and they will begin marketing sneakers for children in the near future.

The sneakers for adults cost about \$325. They work when the wearer presses a button on the shoe to activate. Once the button is pressed, the shoe will transmit information until the battery runs out. For some emergencies, such as a lost child or a person with dementia, a parent or caregiver can call the monitoring service and operators can activate the GPS remotely and alert authorities. There is a monthly fee of \$19.95 for this service.

The GPS sneakers are available in six designs and are like most other walking or running shoes. They have a 2 inch by 3 inch chip that is tucked into the bottom of the sneakers. They also have a plug-and-wear version that allows wearers to remove the electronics module from their old shoes and plug it into another pair, this will be especially beneficial as the child grows.

For more information check out their website at: [www.isaacdaniel.com](http://www.isaacdaniel.com) or call them at 1-800-ID-CONEX

**Wherifone** is a device that is intended to track both children and adults. This device has buttons that can be preset. One button calls up an address book that can be used to dial other numbers. Parents can pinpoint the phone's location by logging onto the website and choosing to "locate" the phone. The phone's location appears as an icon on the map. This device costs approximately \$100.

To learn more about this device check out their website at: [www.wherifywireless.com](http://www.wherifywireless.com) -then click on Wherifone for a demonstration.

### *Mark the Date:*

*January 14:*  
*Board Meeting*

*February 23:*  
*Bowling at Pheasant Lanes*  
*RSVP to Dawn @*  
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#### **Disclaimer Policy**

The editor of this newsletter writes as a non-professional. CIDSO does not promote any therapy, treatment, institution or professional system, etc. Please discuss specific concerns with a professional.