

August 9, 2006

MY STEPSON HAS A DISABILITY

I have a fourteen year-old stepson. My wife and I have been married for four years. I have spent the last thirteen years working in law enforcement. Last November I started substitute teaching and decided in December to resign from my law enforcement job and concentrate on teaching. My fourteen year-old stepson has a disability and I had the opportunity to teach his class. I saw other kids who had more severe disabilities than my stepson.

On the weekend of June 2, 2006, I attended The Family Café, In Orlando Florida. While I was there, there was a seminar on fathers getting involved, Dadvocates. At the time I did not understand what it meant. But after attending the seminar and listening to Rich LaBelle and hearing his testimony of his son I started thinking how come I am not more involved in my son's life, other than being a dad, playing ball and going to the movies and other things.

Well I have been living just like Rich was saying, my wife handles everything, and I don't know why I don't get involved. The answer to that question is he is not just her son, he is my son too and I need to be there for him. Not just at home, but in every aspect. I want him to be able to get the things he is to have and be there to encourage him to do the things he wants to do in his life. I want him to know I care about him and that it is not just that I get to call him son. I want him to grow up knowing that he can count on me for anything that he needs at anytime.

I want him to know that I cared enough to learn what had to be done to help him. As fathers, if we don't get involved, what will our children grow up thinking about us. He looks up to me and I want him to be able to say proudly that is my dad and know that I was more than just a dad, I was his best friend too.

I don't want to be just dad; I want to be a Dadvocate as well.

Martin Thal
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Helping to win for our children