

September 23, 2013

Dear PARENT,

Over the course of the past couple of years, The Bridge School has been developing a Self-Determination Program. We originally focused this program on our older middle school students, but we now feel it is important to further develop and implement this program beginning with our upper elementary and younger middle school students. This year, STUDENT will be a participant in this program.

A key component of the Self-Determination Program involves mentorship from accomplished AAC users. Many of the activities that STUDENT will be participating in as part of this program will be jointly planned and implemented with a mentor.

This year we are very happy to introduce two adult mentors who are very familiar with the Bridge School and who are also accomplished AAC users. Thanh, our first Bridge School graduate, is an alumna of San Francisco State University with a B.A. in Liberal Studies. She is currently a working artist at Creativity Explored in San Francisco. Our second mentor, Tyson, is a Bridging Communities Through Alternative Communication (BCTAC) member. He recently moved to SF and is living independently with the support of his staff which he manages. Thanh uses a PRC device, called a Pathfinder and Tyson uses a Toughbook, with EZ Keys communication software.

We are asking two things of you:

- your support in helping STUDENT complete a limited number of homework activities over the course of the year, and
- your support in helping STUDENT think about and talk about taking charge of his life to the greatest extent possible.

We have found that the sharing and collaboration that takes place during the Self-Determination Program strengthens and furthers our students' self-awareness and self-knowledge. In addition, our students begin to develop the skills to set personal goals and to take steps towards achieving those goals.

We will correspond with you via email as opportunities arise for your participation. Your input is greatly appreciated! Our self-determination lessons will be every Monday from 12:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. The class is being taught by Chris Toomey and Tike DeMarco. Please contact Chris or Tike with any questions about this curriculum.

Sincerely,

Sarah Baroody

Chris Toomey

Tike DeMarco