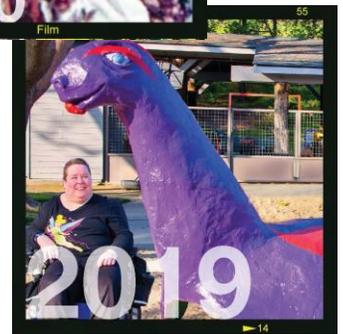


Winter 2020

In 1973, Toni noticed that Dawn wasn't progressing at the same rate as her older brothers, and she took Dawn to Children's Hospital to be evaluated. Over the next few weeks, the doctors ran tests and Dawn was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Toni was shocked and overwhelmed with the prospect of raising a child with cerebral palsy, so when Children's Hospital referred Dawn to We Care Services for Children, Toni immediately signed her up.



As Toni helped Dawn onto the bus each morning, she held on to the hope that this could be what Dawn needed to help her live a happy and eventually independent life. And it was! At We Care, teachers aided her with therapeutic interventions and by the time she graduated, Dawn met all the comprehensive goals that had been set for her. In fact, Toni jokes she sometimes wishes We Care hadn't helped Dawn learn to talk quite as much because she hasn't stopped since! Although Dawn isn't able to walk, she says, "You can't miss something you never had." And when she visited We Care, the children on their trikes loved racing around the playground with Dawn in her wheelchair. Since age 18, she has been able to live successfully on her own, which is what Toni had always wished for her. If it weren't for Toni's persistence at a critical time in her daughter's development, Dawn would not have attended We Care and might not have received the right services at the right age.



Both Toni and Dawn have shown tremendous strength in the face of adversity. Their advice for other families who may be just starting on their own path with developmental delays or disabilities is to love your children and never, ever give up.

Toni has been a huge supporter for We Care over the past 43 years. Back in the 70s, she and the other mothers would host craft fairs and donate all the proceeds directly back to our organization. And as a member of Women of the Moose, she has organized many fundraisers for We Care.

We Care is extremely grateful for the support of Toni and her community, and we're delighted to see Dawn flourishing in her life!

"I want to thank We Care – they changed my life!" - Dawn