

“A Success Story Pays it Forward”

(My brother’s chronic dental health challenge becomes his personal success story and a major source of pride)

By: Jim Rio – Guardian, Brother & OSBI Board of Directors

Since moving to Arizona almost 20 years ago, and becoming my autistic brother’s full legal guardian, I’ve had a complex and critical challenge to managing his healthcare. This challenge has now become a health asset for my brother, as well as a personal growth story.

Like so many families, finding a dental practice that accepts special needs patients, and has the staff and accommodations to provide a welcoming environment, has been non-existent. Over a 30-year period, our family has had to schedule full sedation “Surgical Events”, to gain access to perform deep cleaning, extractions, fillings etc. This process meant it would only happen every 2-4 years.

My ever-increasing concern with my brother, now in his fifties, was that he was heading towards major health challenges that ultimately would stem from this poor level of dental care, and his increasing reluctance to go through with these invasive procedures. We had recently contacted the Dentist/ Oral Surgeon who had performed the last full sedation cleaning and other work. She informed us that she wasn’t working with patients like my brother anymore, but recommended us to another practice just down a couple suites from her office.

The sign above read “DENTISTS for SPECIAL NEEDS”.

We entered the office to check it out, and were amazed. The office is painted in pastel colors, the staff were all positive and engaged with my brother immediately. They explained all their services and gave us a quick tour of their rooms and layout. I set up a “Meet and Greet” for my

brother to come back and start to familiarize himself with the staff.

Today we book cleaning/ checkup appointments every 3 months (versus every 3 years), his

AHCCCS insurance has covered all his surgical and quarterly appointments. The last 2 appointments I now sit in the lobby and my brother walks back independently with the hygienist and requires no sedation, while he gets his teeth cleaned and followed by his check-up from “Dr David” as my brother refers to him.

My brother is excited now to go see Dr David, and has his next appointment posted on his calendar.

I can’t express just how amazing this practice is, and how it has positively impacted my brother’s long term health outlook. I hope some families will go check out this fantastic organization, serving 100% special needs patients.

