

January 20, 2018

Dear WSPA Members,

This morning, I received an email from the Council of PTO asking which PTO Presidents were not going to continue next year because the BOE has a recognition night for outgoing Presidents in May. So...I know that I have been saying for the last few years that this is my last, but I decided after a lot of thought and serving on the WSPA for 9 years in one board position or another that it is time to pass the torch. I am so proud to have been a board member for all these years. WE as a BOARD were able to get so many changes made for all of special needs children and community.

When I started looking back, I saw that in 2012, only 6 years ago, there were hardly any programs for our kids to participate in. There was none of the following programs:

- No programs at the PAL (now Camp Wishes and Saturday program)
- No classes at the CCW (WSPA formed a Kidfit, Dance, Social skills, Fun and Fit class)
- No programs at the Wayne Public Library (WSPA had a storytime , Bingo)
- No after school clubs (now available at most schools)
- No programs at the Wayne YMCA (dance , movement class, and special swim now)
- No sensory movies (WSPA organized them as a group in the past)
- No involvement in Safety Town and Police Academy (WSPA helped our kids be a part of it)
- No team for Relay for Life (WSPA had our 1st team last year)
- No STARS (We helped roll out the EPIC program/STARS)
- No childcare for our workshops (now available for all workshops)
- No fun activities on Saturdays like Fall and Winter Festivals

As a Board we were able to have transportation staff training, training for the lunch aides, disability awareness days, camp fairs, transition fairs, employability fair, bike riding lessons, sibling support group, Communicore with assistive technology. We went from 6 workshops a year to now 12 a year. We had workshops on ADHD, Food Allergies, Dyslexia, Police Registry, Behaviorists, College Nights, Advocates, Psychiatrist, Book signing, Hidden Dangers and Sexuality...so many different topics that affect our community.

Best of all, on a personal level, I have met some of the strongest, kindest, most wonderful special needs parents that I feel will be lifetime friends. I could not have made it thru this journey without the support of my special needs community. Thank you for letting me serve you on the board all these years. It has really been so fulfilling for me to be able to help my fellow special needs families. I did it for ALL OF US!!! I will miss it VERY much!! My son graduates this year from Hills and we have one more year at Valley before entering the "adult services world". (It is scary, so wish us luck!) It is really wonderful to look back and see how far we have come and I am so proud to have been a part of it!!! Thanks again to all my fellow board members, past and present!!! Love you all!!!

So, God Bless. Stay strong thru your journey. We have special kids that will make their mark on the world. Enjoy the ride!!

With all my love and gratitude,
Lisa Minervini