

HOMETOWN HERO:

# Linda Jacob

**“It has been an honor and a privilege to have met these individuals, to have worked with them, and to have spent hours brainstorming with them and, yes, learning from them.”**

Three years ago, I brought my child to Point Pleasant Elementary School.

- A child who barely ever looked up, avoiding eye contact almost all the time.
- A child who would not sit at a desk, nor hold a pencil in a pincer grip.
- A child who hated the doors closed; and wouldn't dare carry her backpack.
- A child who wouldn't leave the classroom; couldn't walk in a line with a group.
- A child who's main response was “BYE!” to just about any question or request.
- Oh, yes, a child who wouldn't dare wear pants or underwear to school, let alone, actually sit on and use the potty.

I brought her here to this school and to this amazing team of Ellen McFarland, Valeria Kristianova, Ryan McEvoy, and Linda Jacob. Affectionately known by their students as Mrs. McFawlend (or Ms. Fargus), Mrs. K, Mr. Mac, and Mrs. Jacob.

It's been what seems like three very short years, but today, I have a daughter who looks me in the eye, and actively seeks out other people.

She not only sits at a desk, but completes her tasks, sometimes completely on her own. The pencil is upright, the paper is straight, though the printing could still use some work.

The doors are actually closed.

She carries her backpack into and out of school, and she even unpacks it.

Lara goes to specials with her fellow classmates and peers, she walks in the line, she sits in the cafeteria for lunch, and she goes out for recess, following the routine and actions of her peers.

Though her favorite response is now “no thank you,” she does say yes and no, please and thank you, and, oh yes, “Mommy.” I have a name now.

My favorite sentence of all is, “Mommy, there's trouble!” (Though she'd probably argue that “I need batteries for camera” is more important.)

It has been an honor and a privilege to have met these individuals, to have worked with them, and to have spent hours brainstorming with them and, yes, learning from them.

I have only one thing to add: Thank you.