

HOMETOWN HERO:

Joanne Durell

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We would like to nominate Ms. Joanne Durell as a Hometown Hero for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Anne Arundel County. She is our son’s preschool teacher at Crofton Children’s Centre. Ms. Joanne is an amazing teacher who shows so much love for each of her students. There are eighteen students in her class and (at least) three of them have autism spectrum disorders. Ms. Joanne welcomes every child as if they were her own. She holds each of them to a high standard and constantly praises them and their achievements.

Our son’s developmental delays prevented him from meeting all of the requirements to participate in the preschool class at the beginning of the school year. Nevertheless, Ms. Joanne never mentioned this. She worked with us to ensure that he was included. She welcomed him and all of the challenges that come with teaching him and caring for him.

Ms. Joanne consistently focuses on our son’s abilities rather than his disabilities. She selflessly spent her own time preparing a lengthy statement for the school district about his abilities, progress and special needs in her class. When she communicates our son’s progress to us, you can see her eyes light up. She is as excited as we are about how far he has come in her class.

We know that we are incredibly blessed to have Ms. Joanne as our son’s preschool teacher. She goes above and beyond the call to ensure that her classroom is a safe, accepting, loving and nurturing environment for each unique child she teaches. For all of these reasons, Ms. Joanne is a Hometown Hero to our son with autism.