

HOMETOWN HEROES:

Nancy Neff & Jeannette Tansey

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The anxiety and elation of that ‘first-day-of-school’ bus ride is hard for any parent. But it’s worse when your child has ASD. My son, Timothy, began his school bus adventures when he was 2 ½ years old. After an anxious morning (for me, not him), his bus arrived and I unwillingly gave up my son for four hours. Three of those four I spent crying and pestering my husband at work about the injustice of my precious little boy not being home where he should be. The other hour was more than likely spent pacing at the end of our driveway (I was too traumatized to remember), waiting for that infernal bus to arrive. Thus began the yearly school bus ritual.

I have to say that all of my dealings with the county and private charter bus companies (12 years’ worth) have been nothing but wonderful, but one is exceptional — R.E. Wilson and Sons Bus Company. They, I believe, are the gold standard. Their employees are gracious and professional, and a true benefit to the ASD community. In particular, I would like to single out my son’s bus driver, Nancy Neff, and her assistant, Jeannette Tansey, for nomination as Hometown Heroes.

Their dedication to the students who ride the bus certainly makes them heroes in the eyes of my family. Anyone entrusted with the safety of children, transporting them to and fro, five days a week for almost nine months, deserves the title ‘hero.’ Add a few ASD kids into the mix, and they become even worthier.

For the last two years, Nancy and Jeannette have proved to be exceptionally professional and courteous. They call when the bus is going to arrive late. They give Tim gifts or treats on various holidays. (Jeannette has even dressed up in full Santa regalia!) They enjoy Tim’s good days and are patient on his bad days. They’re good sports about him blowing kisses (thanks to his sisters not wanting to kiss an icky boy). They check to see if a snack or treat fits with his diet. They put up with all of his quirks, like the time he had to remove ALL of the leaves that had been tracked onto the bus. Their grace and their good humor have made Tim’s school experience much more pleasant.

NOMINATED BY: Cindy Gallagher, Parent