FASD Video Series Transcript: Wyatt and Debbie

Narrator: Lived Experiences with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.
Wyatt and Debbie.

Wyatt: Hello, everybody. My name is Wyatt and I really like to do dog training and photography. I wanna share my story with you today to help individuals on the spectrum like me and to tell them that they have a voice.

Debbie: Hi, I'm Debbie Raymond. And I'm a mom of this lovely individual here, Wyatt York, who's an individual on the FASD spectrum. And I'm just passionate about leveling the playing field and informing people about FASD.

I really noticed when Wyatt was about in first grade that he was really struggling academically, socially, you know, he was delayed in some ways. He had sensory processing disorder. So, I started researching myself, you know, on FASD and just looking, 'cause I did know that he had the facial features and started educating myself. And he just, you know, ticked all the boxes, you know, to be in an FASD category. So, I you know, went after pursuing that and didn't stop until we got it.

Wyatt was 19, not quite 20 when he was diagnosed. It was like 12 years of me fighting to get him a diagnosis. We saw 10 or 12 doctors before we got his diagnosis. At least that number. It was really an emotional time too. It was great to have the diagnosis, but it was also, there was a lot of grief and loss in that, in actually knowing.

Wyatt: I remembered I was probably excited that I got my diagnosis. This made me feel more comfortable and like I was heard and like me and my mom were heard, actually.

Debbie: Both Wyatt's and my relationship with his doctor is wonderful. And she's worked in ER. She has had a little bit of knowledge about FASD because she worked in a crisis clinic before. And they understand the need, you know, to listen to us and then to follow through with us and show any kind of steps of information to Wyatt in all different matters 'cause he's a visual learner and he needs things printed out for him as well.

Wyatt: I would say what's most important to me is them understanding me and taking time and showing me how to do things and slowing down when they talk.

Debbie: She listens. Wyatt can go into the office with Mr. Sloth here, his weighted stuffed animal. She understands that he needs that comfort, you know, that security. She takes the time. She treats him, you know, at the stage of development he is, but yet not in a condescending way. You know, she asked him if she's explained it slow enough, does she need to slow down and say it again.

The wait used to make me feel really frustrated and really sad, but I choose not to do that anymore 'cause I'm not gonna hurt myself, you know? So, now I make sure I take time for me and I, you know, let that stuff go. I meditate every morning, I do some yoga, I walk with my dog. At this point, he plans to live with me as long as he can.

Wyatt: I have like taking the Dial-a-Ride bus. I have door-to-door service and I get my bus pass every month and I like taking the bus. That's how I commute around our town. I'm a courtesy clerk at our Yoke back at home, but I think it's better than a grocery store. It's like, it's just the super coolest store. At my job, like, I still have, like, the guard rails in case I need them, but I can still be me. I either bag groceries, clean stuff, do go-backs, or just walk around the store and see if anybody needs help finding anything. Lots of people love my smile. That's why I like working at a grocery store.

Debbie: We have a really good life, we advocate a lot. We go back to his high school every year and present to the leadership class on FASD. Wyatt used to be a hip hop dancer as well, and he sometimes gets asked back to do that when his legs will allow it. And we just, you know, have fun and relish every day because we only do this, you know, life once. You know, parenting or caregiving an individual with an FASD is a hard journey, and, you know, you gotta have some moxie to be able to do it. But find your people. You need community. You need self-care. You're gonna need to ask for it. You're gonna need to step out of your comfort zone and, you know, just keep fighting for your child. And there's people out there that will be there for you and support you.

Wyatt: I encourage you to advocate. It can be scary and sometimes your audience may look at you like you're green, but that's okay.

Debbie: I don't just do this for my child. I do this for the millions of families across the United States that are just like me and don't have a voice or a diagnosis and they're fighting for their child so that they're heard and, you know, know where to go and how to support their child's brain.

Narrator: For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/fasd.