

A Request from Margaret Carmen

Hello, I am not sure how to go about telling our story. I want to tell you about our little girls. Sara 11, Megan 9 and Hanna 8. They are our granddaughters. Hanna was diagnosed with hydrocephalus in-utero. Doctors monitored closely, when she was 6 months old a shunt was put into her head. At 8 months, Hanna had a bad seizure that was determined to be a result of the shunt draining too much fluid from her brain. She was diagnosed with autism in 2014. Her full diagnosis is hydrocephalus, epilepsy, developmental delay, SPD, language disorder and she is impacted in her vision and memory by the seizures. She is all runner in any new situation. I have worked full time most of my life, but with daycare cost that was not practical until the girls get older. I was working in food service at the school district until 2016. Hanna was having such a hard time in kindergarten and first grade. They were calling me every day to pick her up or that she had eloped and was being unsafe. November of that year she ran from the classroom into the bus lane and was almost hit by a bus. We pulled her out to homeschool. She does good academically on paper and in one on one situations. Working is not an option for me for now. My husband works for the Everett Public School System. He makes just a little too much to qualify for assistance programs. I am glad they are there for families, but we are right on the fringe. Hanna gets a small amount through SSI for her needs. The following year we pulled Megan and Sara to home school also. Sara has ADHD and talks excessively and loud. Megan has executive function issues and learning disabilities as it relates to translating written info to verbal. So they all have their challenges, working on our timeline at home they are making great progress. We are active in 4H and involve that in much of our school activities.

We have a project we have been working towards. Our back yard has a 5 foot slope that makes it mostly unusable. We began getting bids to try to get terraces or something so the girls can use that area. We want to have some activities growing

veggies and being able to play safely inside the fenced area, especially for Hanna. We had a bid which included a driveway that was already in our backyard has come in at about \$3500 because he has the big equipment and doesn't have to rent it or sub it out. He says we can use the dirt from the area we are lowering so we don't have to buy so much dirt. We had the driveway fixed so we can park our old (30 year old) motorhome there. We got a great deal on it, so we can get out and not have the older 2 girls so limited by Hanna. We can take it to 4H activities, if Hanna needs a break we don't have to leave completely. She can rest and the other girls can continue their activities. The girls are showing dogs at the Evergreen State Fair, enter cooking items and creative arts projects. Having a safe familiar place (motorhome) can give them that exposure and activities to enrich their school experiences. It was suggested for us to look into grants and things for help with the backyard space. Hanna needs a safe place to play and build her age appropriate independence. She has had such close work with adults, she needs to learn to play and be with kids her age. I am hoping with Nic's Landscape Renovation being so much more affordable we might still be able to get something done. The timing chain in our van was stretching, so we needed to get a vehicle while we could still trade our 14 year old van in. So that delays the backyard progress again. Sorry this is so long, we appreciate your patience reading our story and reaching to help families.