

April 17, 2008

Dear Parents,

At school today we talked about differences. We read a book called It's Okay to Be Different by Todd Parr, and we discussed all the things that make each of us unique and special.

I brought in a feeding tube and showed the class how it works. We also discussed what a trach is and how it helps people who aren't able to breathe through their mouth and nose. I showed the kids a trach and photos of kids with trachs and facial differences.

We talked about Peter's prosthetic ear and how we take it off every night at bedtime and put it back on in the morning. Peter's routine is get dressed, brush teeth, put band-aid on neck, put on ear, and put on glasses. Feeding tubes and taking ears on and off are such a typical part of our house that even my three-year old wants his ear taken off at bedtime! Obviously, normal for one household can be quite unusual for another.

Because Peter's ear has come off during class recently, the teachers and I thought it might be a good opportunity to open the issue for discussion and questions. No question is too silly or unimportant, and I am happy to answer as best I can.

Enclosed is a letter from Peter that I hope is written in a way for your child to understand. The other essays and "Meet Peter Dankelson" page is meant for your reading if you have any interest in more details about his condition. I have also enclosed information about Children's Hospital of Michigan who so kindly donated the folders. Peter sees about eight different specialists there, and we are very pleased with the medical care he receives. There is also a newsletter from the Children's Craniofacial Association, which is our family's favorite charity. This particular issue highlights our annual "Pete's Scramble" golf outing that raises money and awareness for CCA and kids like Peter.

Please feel free to email or call me with any questions about the enclosed information or presentation that was given to the class today.

Happy Spring!

Dede Dankelson

"Beyond the Face is a Heart"