

2026 YOU MATTER AWARD WINNER



Kirsten Lewis

LM Lower Merion High School



Kirsten Lewis is a remarkable 1:1 aide for students with disabilities. She helped my son in a tremendous way this year -- making lemonade out of lemons on a day that was stressful and actually a bit scary. My son was attending an appointment in the admin building, adjacent to LMHS when the order came to stay put, he could not go back to the building next door where his normal class schedule was taking place, including lunch. The temporary solution was to welcome him into "the Apartment," [a fully furnished apartment on-site at the admin building, designed to support students working on life skills development & independent living]. When lunch time came around, my son's food was inaccessible on the other side of campus. Ms. Lewis took the initiative to turn a bad circumstance into a fun opportunity. Together they took a peek into the apartment's refrigerator & scrounged up the ingredients for a grilled cheese sandwich. A life skills lesson became what my son calls "the best grilled cheese sandwich ever"! He felt very special, as if he had a private chef for the day! Moments of laughter were found during a tough time period. The anxiety of what was going on outside those four walls melted away. Although the primary intent was a practical one, the kindness, creativity & caregiving translated into something else for him. In the midst of an emergency situation, my son knew that his needs were being met & he felt cared for & SAFE because Ms. Lewis was there. I am forever grateful for her common-sense approach, but more importantly, her grace & leadership (setting the tone with her own calm behavior example) during a time when some students were experiencing true fear.



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