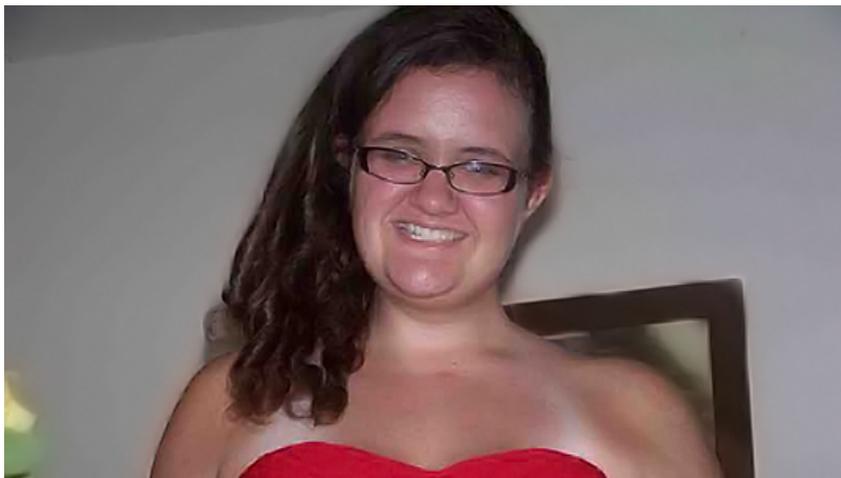


Caity's Success Story

Caity was diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS). She had behaviors such as tantrums from not being able to communicate and transition. She also had many sensory issues.

The first person we met after Caity was diagnosed was Dr. Greg Valcante from the Center for Autism and Related Disorders. Greg gave us the best advice we could have ever gotten and it has held true for all of her nineteen



years. He told us to “treat her first as a little girl and secondly as a little girl with autism.” Caity started public school at age three and also had speech and occupational therapy and many visual strategies at home. There was a balance in Caity’s life between school, therapy and outside social activities so that she could be that little girl she needed to be.

When Caity finished high school, she had a GPA of 3.68 and was named the Student Mentor of the Year by the Big Brothers Big Sisters Organization. Caity received five scholarships from high school and one from Stetson University where she is a sophomore.

Caity is a self-advocate. Here are her words “In my life, I have overcome many challenges that have helped me become the young woman that I am today. I can tell you, it was definitely not an easy path. I had to learn how to adjust to being in school all day and how to put up with peers and students who didn’t understand who I was and why I had so many behaviors. I struggled to overcome the fact that I have autism and that I have a different thought process than my peers do. I now feel as though my disability has not limited my capabilities or my potential, and I am a much stronger person because of it”.