

fAMILY

MEET GINA HOLLEY

Parent Advocate of the Month

March 2025

WHAT MADE YOU ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION?

My son was non-verbal until he was about 3 years old. He was unable to advocate for himself or even express his own basic needs. I knew as his Mother I had to step up in order for him to receive the best possible experience academically.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES?

It means being a champion for him in every aspect of life, including but not all limited to his academic career and school experience overall. I am his voice when he cannot be.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE OTHER FAMILIES ADVOCATING FOR THEIR CHILD'S RIGHTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION?

Don't give up – EVER. You may not get every thing you believe your child needs, but without being diligent and trying your best to communicate their needs you won't be able to get them where they need to be. ASK FOR HELP – Being the parent of a neuro-diverse child isn't always easy and can make you feel alone sometimes. The Arc and other agencies can provide support to help you navigate.



WHAT DOES BEING YOUR CHILD'S BEST ADVOCATE MEAN TO YOU?

I read any and everything I can and ask for input. I look to news articles, laws, books anything I can find to help me understand the process and what is available to myself and my child to help with the process of getting him what he needs.