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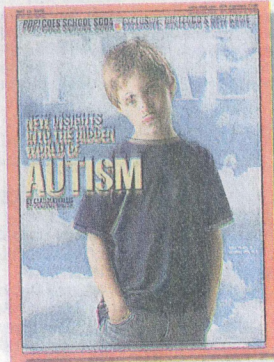
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Autistic child, 8, from Mine Hill is Time's cover boy

Nick Furth, 8, was 'very, very ecstatic' when his picture was on Time's cover to accompany a story about autism, said mom Lorie. 'I was excited, but not too excited, until I walked in a store and saw him standing there.'



Stanhope school helps him meet challenges

BY DIANNE SOMMERS
AND TEHANI SCHNEIDER
DAILY RECORD

MINE HILL — Lorie Furth had advance notice that her son would appear on the cover of Time magazine, but seeing it on a newsstand still surprised her.

"I was excited, but not too excited until I walked in a store and saw him standing there," she said about seeing her 8-year-old son, Nick, in a space that usually features world leaders.

The cover story of the magazine's May 10 edition was about autism. Nick attends the Celebrate

the Children school in Stanhope, which was featured in the story because it specializes in teaching autistic children.

He was photographed at the school but wasn't quoted in the story, which his mother said was condensed after the Time writer spent several days there.

At the time she never thought her son would end up in the cover photo, and said she was very surprised when the magazine called to tell her about it.

"He was very, very ecstatic," she said about her son's reaction to seeing himself on the magazine's front. "Everyone is making

a big deal about it."

"I don't think he realizes that he's on every newsstand in the world right now," laughed her husband, Jeff.

Many neighbors noticed the cover, and someone from Wichita, Kan., even called about it, Lorie Furth said.

But, she added, she and Jeff are trying to downplay the event.

"Instead, we're praising him for following directions," she said, referring to the photo sessions at the school.

Nick is diagnosed with several disorders and has been attending Celebrate the Children for a year.

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Furth

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He has made much progress in learning there, his mother said.

"It's really made a difference in our lives. He loves the school and the teachers. He lives for school these days, and is making progress inch by inch," she said. She added that teachers there often interact with the students even during after-school activities.

Jeff Furth said Celebrate the Children has helped his son to get along with other students, and to control his behavior.

"He's gotten better with temper tantrums and outbursts," he said. "When he gets excited about something or things don't go exactly his way, he's learned to control that."

Nick has a twin, Alex, who has cerebral palsy and attends another special school, Lorie Furth said. She scouted around for specialized schools and toured prospective places for both her boys.

She found that Celebrate the Children was a great fit for Nick, who was mainstreamed at the Canfield Avenue School

through first grade.

"They work with him so they're down on his level," said Lorie Furth. "At his old school, he was suspended until kindergarten. They thought he was a high-active, normal child. They were wrong."

A battery of tests

The Furths ran a battery of tests on their son and discovered the problem. Nick was accepted at Celebrate the Children, which uses a method called DIR, for Developmental Individual Relationship-based Intervention, which is described as motivating, experience-based learning.

The basis of the DIR approach is to help children with learning difficulties connect ideas and develop a logical understanding of the world by respecting what they are interested in, so that they can become independent thinkers, its Web site says.

The approach is ideal for a youngster like Nick, who was diagnosed with ADHD, or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

"He has people right with him, so when he's finished doing a certain assigned task, he won't disrupt the rest of the class," said Jeff Furth.

Children with autism, a developmental disorder, often are described as being completely indifferent to the world around them, living only within themselves. It can cause delays in language development and delays in understanding social relationships.

Autistic children have inconsistent patterns of sensory responses. For example, they sometimes appear to be deaf but other times become distressed by everyday noises. They also have uneven patterns of intellectual functioning.

Celebrate the Children's founder and director, Monica Osgood, is a behavioral consultant and therapist who specializes in teaching social skills to children with autism and other disorders in relating and communicating, according to the school's Web site. She previously started a program in the Mount Arlington School District for preschoolers and elementary school-age children with autism.

Dianne Sommers can be reached at (973) 989-0652 or dsommers@gannett.com. Tehani Schneider can be reached at (973) 428-6631 or tschneider@gannett.com.