

My Uncle, Jay Cannon, is 25 and he lives at the Abilene SSLC. Sometimes Jay is sweet and outgoing and enjoys being the life of the party. Sometimes Jay is abusive, aggressive, and even violent. He can change from a nice to mean very quickly. I'm sixteen, and I have known Jay my entire life, and it has been a privilege. Most people don't understand what Jay is like, and how people like him need to be treated. Being someone who knows Jay, I have seen how different living environments affect his life. He loves his family, loves talking to us and hanging out with us, but it is hard to keep him and others around him safe for long periods of time. I've seen up close how much of a strain it is on my grandparents (his parents) to try to take care of him. They often pick him up for outings and are clearly exhausted after just a few hours. Jay is constantly "GO GO GO". Numerous group homes have failed to take good care of Jay, and my family has tried having him live part-time with his parents and part-time with his sister (my mom.) I have lived with Jay and seen how high-maintenance he is. One person taking care of him as a full-time job is still not enough for Jay. He needs many people, people he likes, to be around him to talk to and do activities with him. The only environment like this is at the Abilene SSLC. Jay has lived at Abilene SSLC for three years now, and he is at the best I have ever seen him. He is getting proper medication from doctors who know what they are doing. He is much healthier now than before. He even has an on-campus job where he makes money and gets to pride himself on his accomplishment.

One part of the Abilene SSLC that I am very impressed with is their church service. Jay has loved going to church since he was a little kid, but he has a limited attention span and can be very distracting and disruptive. On multiple occasions I have gone to the church service with Jay and it has been a great experience for me and my uncle. Jay is very social and likes to lead. I remember when Jay was called to the front to lead his favorite song. (With a bit of help, of course.) The music and service is catered to the many types of residents who attend, verbal and nonverbal, active and passive. While singing "If You're Happy and You Know It" one of the verses was "If You're happy and you know it BLINK BLINK!" for the attendees who couldn't sing. The whole service, and all of the Abilene SSLC for that matter, focuses on giving the residents the best life possible. They have the opportunity to have jobs, earn money, go to the diner, walk the trails, go swimming, participate in dances, and so much more. Jay has never been, and will never be, easy to take care of. The only place that can properly take care of him and keep him and those around him safe is the Abilene SSLC. Jay has a right to a home that properly takes care of him, and closing the ABSSLC will take that away from him.