



~KOLBY~

## Florida 6th Grader severely bullied by peers since Pre-K found solace in being nice to other bullied classmates!

Kolby's mom describes her 11-year-old son as a **very caring, complex, deep thinker** who can also be a **total goofball**.

Kolby is happy at home, but when it's time to go to school, the trauma of being bullied since Pre-K has made him physically sick with anxiety and the fear of on-going and unpredictable verbal and physical attacks.

BULLYING began when Kolby was just four years old. Every week, he would come home from Pre-K with **bumps on his head from being pushed**. One time, he was hanging upside-down on a dome jungle gym when **another boy kicked him hard in the neck, scraping his skin and causing him to fall to the ground**. The school removed that play feature from the playground at Kolby's mom's insistence.

**In 3rd grade, bullies picked on Kolby's "buck teeth" and braces. They hit and taunted him while he stood in the lunch line. He came home with pinch marks on his stomach.** His mom went to the administration and worked with them to stop the bullying. For that short respite, Kolby made a point of identifying other kids he saw being bullied and made it his empathic mission to be nice to them, like the boy with glasses they called "four eyes" and the girl they called "ugly."

Now in 6th Grade, Kolby endured months of bullying that he tried to hide. He was afraid of confrontations if he spoke up. But his mom, a nurse by trade, knew something was very wrong when most school days started with crying, stomachaches and headaches. Every morning, Kolby felt sick and begged to stay home from school. When he got to school, he often called home asking to be picked up, saying his "head hurt" or "I can't breathe." Finally overwhelmed, this brave 6th Grader broke down and told his mom all about the two boys that were tormenting him for three months.

Kolby told his mom that, during the first weeks of school, he thought one of the boys was actually his friend. But, **the friendship ended when Kolby stopped giving the boy his candy and snacks upon demand.** Kolby is on his second round of braces and, **every single day, the two boys called him names like "Beaver" and "Horse Teeth."** **They knocked his backpack off his shoulders, kicked his chair and hit him.** One of the bullies even tried to recruit other classmates to pick on Kolby, too. Thankfully, this "social bullying" tactic failed, but still, Kolby has no apparent friends and no one to bring home or hang out with.



***"I just want to kill myself,"*** Kolby recently told his mom and he has expressed confusion over why he feels so angry so often now, because it's not his nature.

When the bullying was brought to the school's attention by Kolby's mom, their solution was to enact a "Do Not Contact" order, meaning the boys cannot go near each other. However, this leaves a perception that Kolby is somehow at fault for being a victim, rather than giving the consequences solely to the bullies. **NO ONE DESERVES TO BE BULLIED, EVER!**

Kolby's mom worked tirelessly to transfer her son to another school, but found the wait-lists to be hundreds of students long. At the time of writing this story, just as we announce Kolby as our new Friend Mail Recipient, he has been put in homeschool.

Despite the trauma Kolby experienced daily in school, when asked about his current goals, Kolby says he wants "to be the best student I can be" and he always strives to make the Principal's List. He loves to research things and talk or debate about it, from climate change to "shark vs. crocodile... who would win?" His favorite thing to do is Gaming and he thinks being an AC Repairman would be an interesting career with a good income.

## **AMBASSADORS, THIS IS WHERE YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!**

**LET'S send an overwhelming amount of FRIEND STRONG SUPPORT as Kolby adjusts to his new REALITY AS A HOMESCHOOL STUDENT! Let's show him that there are more friends than bullies out there, that it WILL GET BETTER and WHAT AN AWESOME KID HE IS!!**

**Because of holidays and school breaks, the DECEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup> due date for Kolby's letters is **FIRM!!** Please send your support to arrive **BY 12/20** at:**

**BE A FRIEND PROJECT  
449 LANE GATE ROAD  
COLD SPRING, NY 10516**

