

April 25, 2008

A Thank You.....for Tierney Miller – Eastern PA TOPSOCCER

Dear Sue and Kevin:

This letter is a sincere expression of gratitude for both of you, the Boyertown TOPSoccer Program, and especially for my son Ryan's soccer buddy....Tierney Miller.

Ryan lives with Autism. Your program has given him the opportunity to participate in a structured sports program, learn soccer skills, interact with other kids and have FUN!!! For a child with autism, these are coveted prizes.

Tierney Miller has been critical to Ryan's success in this program. Her dedication to my son and TOPSoccer is unparalleled.

Tierney was Ryan's buddy for soccer last year, in 2007. Sometimes he did not participate and she had to chase him around the field. She had to stop him from pulling up grass and throwing stones...instead of playing soccer. At times he was more aggressive than appropriate, but she still agreed to work with him. Tierney patiently and unfailingly worked to help Ryan have a positive soccer experience. She was a true buddy, and Boyertown Community Volunteer.

This year, we walked into the Boyertown Junior High School West gymnasium, and my thought was.....which one of these great buddy volunteers will be willing to take on my Ryan. Tierney met us at the door....all smiles and hellos for Ryan. Ryan ran right past her and she took off after him. I slowly followed behind, and when I caught up with them I asked her.....are you sure you want to do this again? Tierney looked into my concerned eyes and said.....

I have waited all year to be with Ryan. I keep the picture he colored for me on the door of my bedroom. ***I love him.***
I have told all the TOPSoccer volunteers...Ryan is mine. You

can have any other kid, but he is my buddy.

At that moment, the despair that I usually feel as a parent of an autistic child was replaced with hope and optimism. I knew in that very minute that Tierney's love for Ryan would extend past participating in soccer. Through her, Ryan would have the experience of friendship. Friendship...something we all consider a precious gift.

I must tell you that tears formed in my eyes, but this time not out of grief for what will not be for Ryan, but out of joy for what is. Tierney showed me in those few seconds to truly believe that one person can make a difference and change the world. Tierney has certainly changed Ryan's world.....for the better. He has a friend.

Thank you for blessing our lives TOPSoccer. Thank you Boyertown Community members and volunteers. Most importantly.....

Thank you, Tierney Miller.

Yours truly.

Dianne Conklin