

*Kaden was a first grader at Eagle Bay. He has autism and was nonverbal until he turned 6. He had just started developing words and creating short sentences. School was hard for him. He didn't like to go and had a hard time making and keeping friends. Once he was there he was fine, but getting him to school was a constant battle...until he found Rick Walker, the head custodian at Eagle Bay. At the time Kaden loved Keys and would collect keys. He liked to hold Keys and play with them. There is one person in the school who has a lot of keys and that is the custodian. Somehow Kaden met Rick, and Rick became his motivation for everything. His teacher found a way to leverage that and created a behavior chart with Ricks picture at the top. If Kaden was at Green by the end of the day he would get to go recycle with Rick. Kaden's SLP also used Rick to help Kaden learn to say the 'r' sound. Kaden had a team of professionals that used his love of Rick to help Kaden develop an interest in learning. On the mornings that Kaden struggled and had a melt down over going to school we would say, "But what will Rick do with out you?" He would respond with, "Oh No." and then would get ready for school. Around April or May Rick moved to a new school. I was terrified about how this transition would effect Kaden. Rick made sure the incoming custodian new that Kaden was a great little custodian too. Kaden made friends with the new custodian who even made him a name badge with his picture on it to wear when he recycled. Kaden had a whole team of people who were "The One" for him, but Rick was "The One" that really made a difference in Kaden's life and as a result our family's. The video is of their reunion on Friday afternoon. I had stopped by the school to pick Kaden up early and Rick had happened to be in the building. The secretary called Rick down to the office to say hi to someone special and this was the reunion after he had been gone a while. We hope Rick knows how much it means to us that he made a connection with this boy and the influence it had on his learning. At the very beginning of the video he says "Yay, It's been a long time!"*