



# Special Needs

## Meet the People We Help...

### **Problem**

Jenny and Brett called JF&CS's special needs services because they were worried about their youngest son. At age three, Andrew didn't speak much, resisted being cuddled, and seemed to tune out the world. They spoke with their family doctor—who tentatively diagnosed Andrew with autism—but didn't know where to turn for a specialized evaluation. The uncertainty about Andrew and the demands of his care led to frequent arguments between Jenny and Brett—and outbursts from his two older sisters—that seemed to upset their hypersensitive son even more.

### **Solution**

The experienced special needs resource coordinators at JF&CS referred Andrew for assessment at a nearby hospital. They also recommended an in-house counselor for the whole family to help his siblings and parents cope better with the day-to-day challenges of his developmental disorder. In addition, they found a licensed mental health professional to help Jenny and Brett work out the problems in their marriage.

### **Outcome**

The couple learned how to better manage Andrew's behavior problems and build the skills needed to cope with his disorder. This brought more peace to the house, especially among their daughters. Marriage counseling helped them maintain a strong relationship and open lines of communication through the trials of raising a child with autism.