



# Special Needs

## Meet the People We Help...

### **Problem**

At 19, Mark was about to make the transition from high school to adult living—a terrifying prospect for anyone, but even more so for a young man with Asperger syndrome. His father, Jeffrey, called JF&CS because he wanted to know what resources were available to his son after graduation and find out how other families with older children with special needs have coped.

### **Solution**

Knowing that there were many more families out there with this same challenge, the special needs resource coordinator at JF&CS put together a support group for parents of older children with autism and other developmental disorders. Jeffrey and other members of the group began to meet monthly to share their experiences, best practices and other information about how to prepare their children for life in the community after school. The parents also turn to each other for emotional support in tough times.

### **Outcome**

Thanks to information Jeffrey gleans from attending the parent support group, he got Mark on a waiting list for a group home and enrolled him in the state's mental health case management system. He also found out how to get his son daily transportation to a new factory job. There are still many unanswered questions about Mark's future, but he is now on the road toward independent living.

"There's a big problem when children with special needs grow up, and they are no longer in the educational system," say special needs resource coordinator Linda. "That's why putting together a group of people who can share information and try to help each other out through this transition is so important."