

a life of dignity and self worth



“My son is just Andy”



At ACCEL we get the honor and privilege to teach, guide and care for some of the most amazing people on the planet. Often when we share about the ins and outs of our days caring for individuals who have severe and profound special needs others say, “I don’t know how you do it?” To us, that question is easy.

We show up every morning to do whatever our children and adults need because they are that cool.

One of those wonderful people was Andy Freedman, a student at ACCEL’s K-12 program for the last five years. Around here he was known as “Awesome Andy”, and sometimes even “Rico Suave”. Andy brought joy to everyone’s face. He was a true shining star at our school.



We are sad to share with the ACCEL community that Andy passed away earlier this school year.



Andy Freedman and his family are incredibly important to ACCEL. Their story is near and dear to our hearts, and we could not be more honored to keep serving students like Andy in his honor. His mother, De, shared with us that at ACCEL, Andy is just Andy. He is not his condition or his challenges, and in his memory, she wants to make sure that, “Andy keeps making the world a better place.”

Therefore, in partnership with the Freedman Family, we have created the Andy Freedman & Debbie Wyzykowski Student Fund.

At ACCEL, every child is celebrated for their personal potential. Our team of experts creates a customized pathway for each to not only succeed in life but to thrive. For Andy, his challenges meant that we were dedicated to helping him move, interact with others, and keep his fine and gross motor functions as long as he could. This team has come together to celebrate him and has shared a few words which we included below.



We want to thank the entire ACCEL community for entrusting us with your loved ones, for supporting us with your generous gifts of time and money, and for getting the word out about what we do here.

Because of you more young people like Andy can be given a pathway to not only thrive but to be loved and respected.

Memories of Andy:

"I met Andy many years ago when he was a little boy at a different school program. I was so happy when he transitioned to ACCEL, I knew he would benefit from our programs in so many ways. He loved being a people watcher at school, he was always so curious and always smiled at me. I also recall aquatics being a very happy time of his day. I will miss his physical presence, but I will always carry a part of his spirit with me."

Jon (Principal)

"There are special people in our lives who never leave us, even after they are gone."

"He always arrived with a smile and being "Rico Suave" trying to kiss the ladies' hands. When I first got Andrew during the summer of 2019, I took Andrew to the ACCEL pool for what many said was the first time. That was the happiest I had ever seen him (aside from playing with bubbles with therapy). I will miss Andrew greatly and he will always be a part of room 7."

MaJenta (Teacher)

"Andy had the biggest personality- who was not afraid to let you know what he wanted and did not want. He was not afraid to be himself, work hard, and give it his all. He will be so missed."

Allison (Occupational Therapist)

"Andy had a contagious smile! He loved to use bubbles and stuffed sea animals during our therapy sessions. He was always good at sharing and made sure to take turns with me blowing bubbles during sessions."

Arrianna (Physical Therapist)

"Gosh, Andy was my guy ♡ I don't even know which memory is my favorite. A couple of years ago, Andy and I played bowling in the multi-purpose room during our speech session. We had so much fun that day that he didn't want to go back upstairs to get ready for bus time. He refused to let go of the bowling ball and kept saying "no" on his device and trying to run away from me 😊 Loved that self-advocacy!"

Brianna (Speech-Language Pathologist)

"Andy was a student that I got the pleasure of caring for while he was at ACCEL. He was so special, and I remember the first time I started caring for him. It was ESY, and I was so nervous! I called his mom just so I could be prepared for what his needs were and to make sure I was caring for him correctly. We ended up talking for 45 minutes as she told me everything about him and even shared baby pictures of Andy. From that conversation, a great friendship developed and an understanding that she wanted the very best for Andy and as a mother I understood that. My goal was to make him feel loved and cared for and I hope I achieved that goal. Andy was easy to love, and he will be missed!"

Janet (Nurse)

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Accel is a nonprofit organization that provides exceptional educational, behavioral, therapeutic and vocational programs to individuals with special needs. We give them the necessary skills to learn to work and live successfully with dignity and independence.

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