



The Council's 2018 story/photo contest was centered on the Expectations Matter theme. We received many entries, each one with an important message about how expectations have made a difference in the life of a person with developmental disabilities.

**Here is the winner:**



*photo: Michael Granata, submitted by Laurie Granata*

Sixteen years ago, I gave birth to a beautiful baby boy named Michael. Michael was born with Down syndrome.

Early on, my husband asked the doctor if Michael could learn Spanish. Our extended family is Hispanic, and most of the children learn Spanish as their first language. The doctor explained that Michael would probably have speech and language issues, and we should focus on English. It was disappointing, because he was the first child in the family that wouldn't speak Spanish.

As the years went on, our attention was focused on therapies and schoolwork. Learning another language always seemed out of reach.

When Michael entered high school, my husband suggested he take Spanish as an elective. I was doubtful, fearing that other students would laugh at him. I reluctantly agreed, and much to my surprise, Michael quickly picked up the language! I received glowing reports from the teacher about his success. He was an A student! Even more heartwarming was the comment a classmate made to Michael's sister: "Is that your brother? He's in my Spanish class. He's really smart. When I don't know the answer to something, I ask him!" I've never been so happy to be wrong.