



## AUTISM: A Family's Message of Hope and Promise

While in eighth grade, Stefan Kavan had a goal on his individual education plan (IEP) addressing self-advocacy. Stefan put a short power point slide presentation together and delivered his message in front of 120 of his peers in the media center at his school. Stefan shared his interests, passions, and struggles. His peers discovered that though his interests were primarily roads and trains, he also liked to swim, bike and jump on a trampoline. He also drove a 4-wheeler like some of the other guys. He shared that he "liked" his autism, and though he was different, he was comfortable with who he was.

Shortly after that, Stefan and Barb began presenting as a mother-son tag-team. So began, "Educating Trainman," a story on autism and how it impacts us on a daily basis. We have presented to parent groups, general and special education service providers, community members, and school administrators. Our message is one of hope and promise!

The message and story resulted in our coauthored book called, **TRAINMAN**. Stefan's personal elementary experiences, published by the Autism Asperger's Publishing Company, focuses on acceptance and developing friendships through special interests.

In 2010, New England Book Festival *awarded Trainman: Gaining Acceptance... and Friends ... Through Special Interests* with Honorable Mention.

If your Parent Support Group is interested in having Barb and Stefan come to share their unique story, you may contact Barb at [barb@trainmanandmom.com](mailto:barb@trainmanandmom.com) for more information. For more details on this wonderful presentation just visit: [www.trainmanandmom.com](http://www.trainmanandmom.com)

### What other Parents have said:

“Wonderful Presentation! Realistic but hopeful and heartfelt.”

“You have given me hope as a parent. One minute I was crying, the next I was laughing.”

“Awesome presentation. I would recommend it to any parent or educator.”

“Loved the interaction between Stefan and his mom. Truly great.”