



Nature's Edge is an amazing place. The whole place! The people! The animals! In my opinion they can all be described in one word, "Miracle." Our son, Cody, progressed just fine, in fact ahead of most children, until about age 2. Then we noticed an extreme change, his first words, turned into noises and grunts, he developed odd behaviors, and would scream for hours at a time. By the time he was 3, we had his sister, Dakota and had moved from Illinois to Northern Wisconsin. Immediately, we enrolled him into early childhood programs and birth to three in Washburn County. What a nightmare. With speech therapy through the school, he began to talk, not well, but it was partly understandable. Summer sessions were a disaster, he wanted nothing to do with the hospital settings and talking him was unbearable. The doctors and therapists and tests and hospitals over the next few years played their toll on him. School and home, just got worse and worse. He became more violent and uncontrollable. By age 9, we had tried everything we thought we possibly could. We were worn out physically and mentally. He was out of school more than in and it seemed like nobody wanted to deal with him. People kept suggesting sending him to this place or that. Then I was flipping through the paper and saw an ad for Nature's Edge. They were hiring an OT. Well I figured if they needed an OT they must offer Speech and PT. When I asked his counselors and current therapists I got answers like, we've never heard of them, they are too far and too expensive, you can't pay for it. Or they will never take him; it's not the right place for him. The only person who encouraged us to try it was his doctor. Once I found out more about Nature's Edge, and in May of 2004, I convinced my husband we should take a look. Cody had been removed from school again, so we took him along. When he first climbed out of our van and this little three-legged dog, Buddy ran up to him, a smile came across his face and he laughed. Something we hadn't seen in almost six years. I think right then and there, even before the tour, Pat had made up his mind that no matter what, we had to bring Cody to Nature's Edge. He has been there three days a week ever since. It's an hour drive one way and he does have to miss a little bit of school, but it's well worth it. He has made tremendous progress, and as many people in our own community have noted, "He is a different little boy, we are so happy for him." The therapists are great, you can see that they really truly care and connect with the kids. The support from their families as well, giving of themselves to help out in sessions is awesome. They are just as excited and encouraged as the children every time they meet a goal and make progress. The animals are so wonderful, they know and sense that these kids need a type of unconditional love and kindness that they can provide. Cody has formed bonds with these animals in a way no person will ever be able to do with him. Instead of therapy being this awful traumatic experience, he now looks forward to going. The volunteers are awesome, to care that much, and be willing to give of themselves for these children and animals and for a great cause, is wonderful to see. I love them all. To the staff and their families, all the animals, and all the volunteers, I just have to say thanks, because you all truly are a Miracle. You have given me back my bright eyed, happy little boy. You have given us hope for his future and strength to continue fighting for him. We have built him a website. It's just pictures and a little bit of stuff from his appointments at nature's edge. You can see it at <http://cody-naturesedge.tripod.com>

Krys Robinson