

## Mojo calms Sean's classmates

Shelby Svendsen

We had Sean's open house at school tonight. My husband is a teacher in the same district, so he had to be in his classroom, which meant that I had to take Sean & Mojo by myself. It was super crowded and the kids were bouncing off the walls, but guess what? What used to be a *nightmare* for us (I actually did not attend the open house last year) turned out to be wonderful! And eye-opening!

We finally made it to his classroom (after talking to what seemed like a million people) and found out Sean is doing great in his regular ed classroom, and they love him.

They are working on life skills in his reg ed classroom, and he is given a partner to help him - she has had to explain to the kids that only one classmate can sign up to be Sean's helper per day! I love that they are so accepting of him and that they *love* Mojo!!



OK, so I went to the self-contained classroom next. As I was looking through his workbook and reading his new schedule, a mother came over and started telling me that she was so grateful that we had Mojo.

Apparently, her son is in Sean's self-contained classroom and he was having a very bad day today. He was extremely upset and melting down BIG time. They asked him if he would like to pet Mojo (thinking it would be a distraction). The boy said "Yes," so they took him over and Mojo lapped on him.

The boy just sat and petted and petted Mojo. They were like that for about 15 minutes, and it seemed like with every pet this little guy settled down and cried less. Finally, they made Mojo get up and go back to Sean, which he did. But he had done a great job and just reinforced how valuable these dogs are.

The mom also told me she was very surprised because the boy doesn't really like dogs and would *never* have thought one could settle him down. Mojo is soooo laid back when he is working. He is very calm and has an extreme amount of patience. I explained that these dogs are so well trained that they do not seem to scare kids, even those that are afraid of dogs.

On another note, I spoke with another mother who told me that her autistic son is in class with Sean and has not had a meltdown (he usually has four or five a day) in the last five school days.

He and Sean are on a similar schedule and the end of the day they both “unwind” together and usually sit and play with Mojo until it is time to leave. She thinks that this has helped him to remain calm and he knows that he can go pet Mojo if he feels upset.

I know that we got Mojo for Sean and that is his primary responsibility but for those who are still working on fundraising or are waiting for your turn at training, please know how big of an impact these dogs make!

*Shelby, whose motto is “To the world you might be one person, but to one person, you might be the world.”*