

# Disabled Fables

Celebrating  
the lighter side  
of parenting a  
child with  
disabilities

Dan Montville


WINNER  
Robert Benchley Society  
2007 Award for Best Humorist



RAISING A  
SPECIAL  
CHILD  
AHEAD



PLEASE USE  
EXTREME PATIENCE  
AND  
UNDERSTANDING



A GOOD  
SENSE OF HUMOR  
WOULDN'T HURT  
EITHER

# **Disabled Fables**

**Dan Montville**

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"Humor is emotional chaos remembered in tranquility."  
- James Thurber, 1894-1961, Humorist



Drawing by Rodger Nordlund

# To the Special Needs Warriors

Who are they? They are the hundreds of thousands of parents, family members, and friends of those the public has labeled, special needs, handicapped, retarded... different.

To the outside world they are different from everyone else, but truthfully, they're no different than any other emotionally, intellectually, even psychologically; they simply are loving personalities trapped in bad bodies. They have their challenges getting along in a world designed for normal people.

But what is normal? Normal is in the eye of the beholder. It is defined by one's lot in life or perspective onto it.

In 2009 Dan Montville wrote a ground breaking book titled *Disabled Fables*. It was a book about life, his life, the life of his family, and the life of his son Oscar, who, throughout the book, he affectionately refers to as "O".

Here is what Dan wrote as the opening to the book, to set the stage for readers.

## **Open Here**

This is a happy collection of snippets about raising a family of four boys, one of who happens to have disabilities. For thirty-some years, we've been on a virtual roller coaster, both emotionally and physically. At times, our lives have been peppered with

difficulties that have pushed us to the brink of emotional collapse. but then we've had things happen that were as quirky as any in a Mel Brooks movie.

Some may feel that a lighthearted treatment of a sensitive subject such as this projects the idea that it's been as much fun as having a puppy. It never was, and it never will be. But it wasn't unremittingly morose either. That's why God gave us Russian novels and retirement plans. Instead, we want to share a few warm stories taken from our journey.

With Mr. Montville's permission, what follows is an excerpt from *Disabled Fables*. Specifically the chapter on which he wrote of his and Oscar's experiences dealing with dentists and dentistry and a long journey to finding the right one for Oscar and the family.

You can purchase a complete copy of *Disabled Fables* on Amazon.







# Going Mental Over Dental

The O puzzles us when it comes to the world of healthcare. He has this love-hate affair going on with hospitals, nurses, and doctors. They were all such an integral part of his early life that they left an indelible impression. To this day, every time we go past our local hospital, he never hesitates to enthusiastically point it out. Both Fina and I have been hospitalized in the past several years, and he just loves to visit. But, when he finds out that he's there because they need to draw some blood, it can take as many as six people to hold him down. He's not much better when getting local anesthetic shots at the dentist's office. Although most of us don't care for needles either, we can resign ourselves to the necessity of the situation with an adequate grimace during the jab. The O just fights it with no letup.

Because of his combative manner, he didn't get a lot of quality dental care in his early years. Initially, we took him to my dentist who had taken care of me since I was a boy. Even when the doc was successful in getting some anesthetic in Oscar, he just fought the program until we would relent and call it a day.

Finally, when The O was eleven years old, the day of decision came. We could tell that he was experiencing discomfort while eating, so we set up an appointment with a dentist referred through the Easter Seals

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Foundation. He was an amiable young man who projected his professionalism adeptly.

His initial exam showed that The O needed nine fillings. He felt that the best way to handle the extensive work was to admit Oscar into a hospital. There, he could put Oscar under general anesthesia and do all of the work in one prolonged session.

We made the necessary arrangements and admitted him the day before the procedure for lab work and to control his diet. The O was very excited about this adventure and cooperated beautifully. Once in his room, we changed him into his hospital gown and he wasted no time in finding the button on the TV remote to summon the nurse. After the second false alarm, we commandeered the remote and assured Nurse Ratchet that it wouldn't happen again. Soon afterward, a technician arrived to take him to the lab for blood work. We advised him in advance that our precious son would not prove to be a cooperative blood donor. When we reached the lab, we offered to help, but he insisted that we wait outside. He had several other technicians in the lab to help "if needed," and after all, they were professionals.

We gave each other a knowing glance and waited just outside the room. Soon, shouts of "Grab him!" and "Hold him still!" reverberated right through the heavy steel door as if it were made of air. It wasn't long before the inevitable plea for help came. "Ahem, Mr. and Mrs. Montville, do you think that you could come inside and help us to restrain your son?" We knew they were trying to restrain him by grabbing his arms and legs with their

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hands. This approach still left his body free to wriggle about like giant caterpillar. Once we demonstrated our perfected technique of overpowering him with our entire bodies, they nodded with approval. It was a good thing they learned how strong he was then. When the time came for him to be anesthetized the next day they made sure that they had enough able bodies on the floor.

The required work would take six long hours to complete, part of which was for x-rays to make sure no additional problems existed. Once the procedure began, there was no stopping until it was done.

Einstein's Theory of Relativity says that time slows down as an object travels faster in space. Rapid transit is only one method to make time crawl. Sitting in a hospital waiting room for six hours watching soap operas on a TV with horrible reception, and drinking countless cups of vending machine coffee that tastes like it was filtered through an ashtray also does the trick.

We never left the area because a nurse would come out to update us every so often. Her progress reports helped take the edge off our built-up anxiety. It might only have been dental work, but whenever a person is under general anesthesia for six hours, there is risk.

Finally, when it was over they wheeled The O to his room. We expected him to be extremely groggy for the rest of the day. Wrong! Even though his body had just gone through a traumatic experience, he acted like an exuberant kid who had just come back from Disney World. His appetite was excellent and he never settled down until we brought him home the next day. Then, he wasted no time in hitting the sack where he spent the

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next two days.

Exactly two weeks after he was discharged, the hospital sent us a ten-day demand letter. In that short time, our insurance company had declined the entire bill. The hospital wasted no time in issuing a final notice of its own for the full amount. We contacted our insurance company, and their position was that dental work isn't normally done in hospitals. Consequently, they would neither pay for the dental work nor the hospitalization. Our simple reasoning was that since we had both dental and hospitalization coverage, they should honor the bill. Of course, common sense has nothing to do with how insurance companies pay claims.

Once again, we found ourselves fighting for so little. We had the right to appeal their decision, and we faithfully followed the convoluted instructions on their appeal forms. We knew it would be futile, but we had to go through the motions. Although we felt worn out, which is probably what they wanted, we didn't go away. We finally filed a complaint with the Illinois Department of Insurance, which was amazingly simple to do. A phone call to a courteous human being resulted in comprehensible complaint forms appearing in our mailbox a few days later. We filled them out and it brought about a speedy resolution to the matter. Insurance companies don't care to have complaints on file if they can possibly help it, so they paid. This still left us with a thousand dollar deductible portion to pay off, which took a while.

A few months later, our insurance premium jumped to nearly a thousand dollars a month. Within a year, it

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more than doubled to \$2300.00 a month. Once again, we filed a complaint with the Department of Insurance. We claimed that the insurance company illegally singled us out of our group to get rid of us. They investigated our claim and, although sympathetic, sided with the insurance company. A tiny clause in the agreement allowed the company to switch us from one group to another, supposedly to evenly spread the risk. But still, they couldn't single anybody out for a rate increase unless the entire group's rate went up equally. That's true, but they switched our coverage to a different state that allowed groups to be as small as one person. Yup, we became "the group," and it was legal. We lost the battle and the war.

Even with the extensive work accomplished, there didn't seem to be any good approach to proper dental care for our son, who was now twelve years old. We thought about asking the dentist who had worked on Oscar to take him on as a patient, but his office was just too far away for us to consider. We were also embarrassed about how long he had to wait for his well-deserved fee.

The following year, we took him to another dentist who had come highly recommended by my own dentist. He was an elderly man, and the stacks of fishing magazines in his waiting room betrayed his true passion. Although somewhat sterile in his demeanor, we stuck with him for over a year because we were delighted at how calm The O was with him. The doctor would take him in alone, and after only a few minutes, he would come out with a broad smile pronouncing The O's teeth to be healthy and cavity-free.

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Gee, his teeth are in good shape, and he really must like this guy considering the lack of any disturbance to be heard from the waiting room. Life is good, even if his charges are a lot higher than normal.

One day, I took him for a regular checkup, and I just couldn't bear to look through one more issue of Bass Master Journal. So, I decided to peek in and watch the exam. I was dismayed to see the doc pull The O's lower lip out and just give a cursory glance at his teeth. He spotted me, and declared with a big smile that everything was A-OK, but I wasn't so sure. When I got home, I told Fina that I thought the doc was charging us for doing nothing, and that a second opinion was in order.

Through a friend, we learned of an orthodontist who specialized in treating children. We made an appointment for an initial consultation, and arrived early to fill out the new patient forms. The waiting room was amply filled with toys and children's storybooks, and the doctor turned out to be a charming man with a magnetic personality. We could see why he had built up such a successful practice. However, children with disabilities seemed to be another story. He advised us that our son would have dental problems all of his life. The best plan to insure his quality of life would be to cap all of his teeth.

Although this would certainly be expensive, we almost came to believe that this might indeed be the most logical way to preserve his dental health – almost. What he told Fina and me next stunned us with the same impact as if we had just learned that our children were adopted. He recommended stainless steel caps! With a straight face he said, "Look, I'm approaching this from a functional

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standpoint. It isn't as if he has to worry about his appearance.”

We said thank you and went home blazing mad.

After a few weeks of obsessing over the audacity of this maxillary meathead, we brushed him off. (Besides, everyone knows how easily stainless smudges.)

We did a little research and wound up taking him to the dental clinic at one of the most respected teaching hospitals in the Chicago area. It happened to be near our home, which was a big plus in the trekking department. We were confident that the treatment he would get would be first class, and the bill might just be a tad more agreeable to our new insurance company.

The clinic was not going after any awards for ambiance. You might say it was quite clinical in its appearance. After our initial visit, the dentist advised us that The O needed a lot of work. He consulted with a few other doctors, and they concurred that they would have to do the work as a team under general anesthesia, which of course meant more hospitalization. But this time Oscar could go to our own local hospital since the doctors were also on staff there. We felt that The O would feel more comfortable there since he knew the place so well from his vomiting years.

We agreed, and made the arrangements with our eyes open this time. I phoned our new insurance company and asked for their approval of the plan. The young woman's voice on the other end of the line expressed confidence that there would be no problems in honoring the claim. And they did.



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Regarding the doc who collected fees for doing nothing, we just wrote him off. Yes, we might have had grounds for a malpractice suit, but we were just plain burned out. I called him and told him what I thought about his negligent treatment of our son. I also told him sarcastically that he could count on a lot of referrals from us, especially if he cared to get into alligator dentistry. He retired shortly afterward. Perhaps the reminder of other predatory creatures sporting wider grins than his demoralized him.

We checked The O in the day before the procedure, and except for the necessary blood drawing, he enjoyed the attention. When he was two years old, he was a regular at this hospital whenever he had vomiting episodes. The only way to get them to subside was to put him on IV fluids. His ankles still bear the scars where they made the incisions to find suitable veins in his tiny body. Some of the nurses from the pediatric ward were still around, and when word spread that The O was in the neighborhood, they came up to his room and treated him like a long lost buddy. He really liked that.

Confident that he was in good hands, we left the hospital for a while to get things ready for Fina to return to stay with him for the night. The O has had more than a few stays in hospitals, especially in his early childhood years. In the process, Fina and I have become proficient at splitting our time between the hospital and home. We developed a “survival kit” that had all of the big and little necessities that enabled us to stay with him 24 hours a day. Hillary Clinton claims that it takes a village to raise a child. It also takes a big tote bag

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When we returned, we entered the main lobby carrying a pillow, a blanket, and the survival kit. Since we knew where we were going, we just smiled at the woman at the information desk as we veered left toward the elevator. Halfway into our lazy left bank, the information lady caught our attention with an authoritative tone in her voice and said, “Excuse me, but you’re going the wrong way.” Well, that was news to us, but we politely stopped anyway to hear what she had to say. She continued with a polite smile, “The Lamaze classes are in the South Wing—you’re headed for the North Wing.”

Lamaze classes! We looked at each other with wry smiles, both trying to think of a snappy reply like, “Oh, yes, we know where the classes are held, but we have to make the baby in the elevator first.” But civil decorum held sway, and we politely informed her that, having retired from the baby-making business, we were going up to our already-born son’s room. Even though we explained our purpose politely, the woman’s face had quickly become a perfect match to her bright pink smock. Maybe we just bring a glow into peoples’ lives.

The next morning, Oscar went into the operating room for twenty-three fillings. It took about eight hours this time, and even with hourly updates from the assisting technician, it seemed endless. It wasn’t until after the procedure that we met Dr. Jim, his regular dentist-to-be. He was a physically fit man in his early forties. Although soaked from perspiration, he looked like he could jump back in the operating room and do twenty-three more fillings. He consulted with us in great detail, and we came away with a very good feeling about him. We asked him if

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he would take The O on as a regular patient. He not only agreed, but he also felt quite strongly that hospitalization wouldn't be necessary again. He assured us that he had numerous patients with varying degrees of disabilities, and that he was sure he could handle our son.

Later in the year, we took The O to Dr. Jim's office for his first visit. He invited us to stay with Oscar during the initial exam, and we were pleased at how well Dr. Jim worked with him. He identified some minor problems that would only get worse with time, so we set up a series of appointments to take care of them. Over the next several visits, Dr. Jim always exercised extreme patience with him. As expected though, when the time came for actual drilling and filling, Oscar became quite uncooperative. He fought especially hard when it came time for the anesthetic. His obstructive ways ate into our allotted time, and other patients had to wait longer and longer.

Nevertheless, Dr. Jim never hurried, and became quite adept at injecting the local anesthetic "on the fly." The O wasn't much better when it came time for the drilling either. He protested like a wrongly accused man being escorted to a shotgun wedding. But Dr. Jim had perfected a technique whereby he anticipated the lulls in Oscar's behavior. He would then "pounce" in with his drill and get as much work done before the next wave of protests welled up. Even during the lulls, Oscar didn't keep completely still, and Dr. Jim had to keep in synch with The O's pendulum-like movements. He's definitely the man you would want to work on your teeth during an earthquake.

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After a number of visits, The O developed a level of comfort with Dr. Jim, and drilling and filling became easier. As a matter of fact, he turned into a model patient. Well, almost. The problem of administering the local still remained. Then he would resist with every fiber of his strength. It wasn't unusual for us to show up at the office with one or two of his brothers just to hold him during the shots. After that, he would settle down.

A great contributing factor to his good behavior during the actual work was that Fina would bribe him. The O is a coffee fanatic, particularly if it's from Dunkin' Donuts. So Fina would promise him that they would stop at "Dunkin' D" afterwards if he would be good in the chair.

Impressed with The O's negotiating skills, Dr. Jim got to thinking. On one momentous visit, while Oscar was squirming and wriggling in his usual semi-successful effort to avoid the local, Dr. Jim did something totally unexpected. He said, "Oscar, listen to me. If you hold still and let me inject the anesthetic, I'll buy you a large cup of Dunkin' Donuts coffee." The O immediately ceased all hostile activity, looked right at Dr. Jim, and said, "Uhhh?"

As a reminder about The O's verbal ability, he doesn't talk. He grunts. Once a person gets to know him, his tonal inflections convey a wide variety of meaning. On this occasion, there was no mistaking Oscar's expression. He stopped resisting, and pointedly asked the doctor in "Gruntlish", "What did you just say?" Fina and I looked at each other and shared the same feeling: the doctor had just overstepped his bounds. We felt that he didn't understand the full implications of his statement, and we attempted to initiate a bit of damage control.

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Almost immediately, Fina reassured The O that if he behaved, we would buy him a cup of coffee. At the same time, I told Dr. Jim in a low voice that you don't make promises to The O that you can't keep, because he firmly believes that a deal is a deal, and he has a long memory. Dr. Jim answered me without the least bit of hesitation. "Who says I won't? I made a deal with him, and I intend to keep it."

This moment was the beginning of a whole new chapter in creative patient relations in dentistry. The O took the man up on his promise, and cooperated completely. He sat there as relaxed as a sloth, and let Dr. Jim numb his skull, and work on his teeth. We sat there in utter amazement, but with a degree of apprehension because now it was up to the Doc to deliver on his promise.

After dinner, Oscar turned the porch light on, and sat on a folding chair looking out the window for Dr. Jim. It was a sad sight, and we just knew that we'd have to hop out to get him a cup of coffee to pry him away. Yes, Dr. Jim had gotten the cooperation he needed out of his young patient that afternoon, but he'd pay a heavy price on Oscar's next visit.

But then, our doorbell rang. Sure enough, there stood Dr. Jim smiling with a large decaf straight from Dunkin' Donuts! This marked the first installment of a long-standing tradition that has gone on for over seventeen years. On those evenings after an office visit, The O will watch patiently through our front porch window waiting for Dr. Jim to arrive with his promised cup of detoxified swill. Even on occasions when it's freezing cold in the dead of winter, The O will still patiently wait out on the

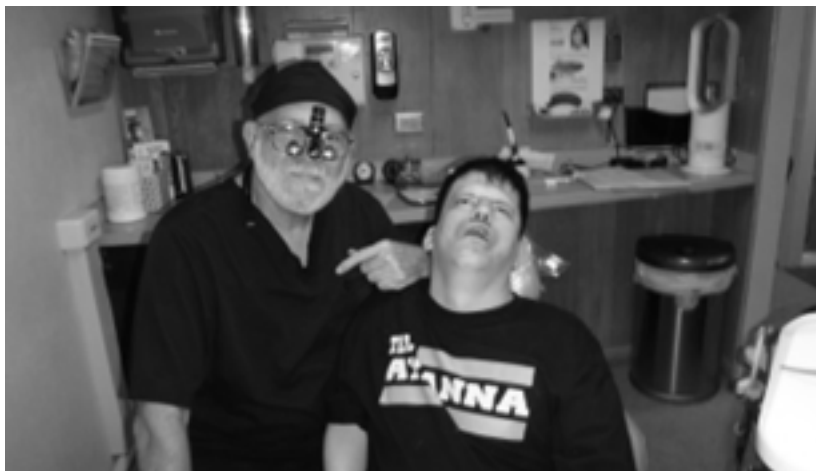
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porch.

In the ensuing years since he first made that pact with The O, Dr. Jim has missed delivering that cup of Dunkin' Decaf only twice.\* It takes a big chunk of personal energy to do something like this, especially at the end of a long workday. We have offered to give Dr. Jim a break, and buy the coffee ourselves to keep the deal with The O, but he believes in staying true to his word.

And they say doctors don't make house calls any more. Maybe you just need the proper grounds.

\*The number has now skyrocketed to 3 times. See the end of the book for an important 10-year update since this story was written.



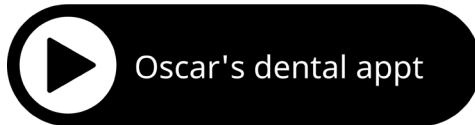


### **10 Years Later...**

Dr. Jim still brings coffee after every dental visit except for the time I told him that Jake and I were going to a ballgame that evening and that Fina was going to stay with The O. We forgot to mention that the game was 90 miles away in Milwaukee and that Fina and The O were going to stay in the hotel and use the pool. Poor Doc stood at our front door, hot coffee in hand, ringing the bell to no avail. It just doesn't pay to be nice to some people.

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Thanks to the modern age of technology, you can see a short video of Oscar visiting Dr. Scapillato for a regular check up and cleaning and their post appointment Dunkin Donuts coffee ritual. Scan the QR code to watch the video.



If you're unable to scan the QR code, go to:  
<https://l.ead.me/dentalvisit>

Dr. Scapillato is the only general practice dentist with over 50 years experience treating the special needs community. If you know of a Special Needs Warrior caring for a loved one with special needs and in need of a caring dentist, contact Family Dental Care of Oak Park at 708-991-3825



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Dr. Scapillato created the Special Needs Day of Dentistry, which is the first Friday of March. On its inaugural day, reporter Lauren Petty of NBC News Chicago featured this auspicious occasion on the evening broadcast across Chicagoland. Scan the QR code to view Lauren's broadcast.



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As a result of the Special Needs Day of Dentistry there has been an outcry from people with special needs loved ones, family, and friends for access to great dental care. Dr. Scapillato founded the Special Needs Warrior program to help families seek out dentists skilled in treating special needs dental patients.

For more information about Special Needs Warriors, visit, <https://www.specialneedswarriors.org/>



Most recently, Dr. Scapillato founded The Special Smiles Foundation. A 501(c)(3) charity established to help special needs patients and their families to pay for dental care and treatment. For more information about The Special Smiles Foundation and how to qualify for dental care subsidies, contact Family Dental Care of Oak Park at 708-991-3825

## **Disabled Fables - Going Mental Over Dental**

We wish to thank Dan Montville and Oscar for the privilege of sharing their story and the opportunity to reprint it here.

The Montville's efforts, along with Dr. Scapillato are focused on increasing awareness for the need of better dental care for special needs folks, but also the general improvement of recognition, treatment, and care overall.

If you are a relative or friend of someone with special needs, you are also a Special Needs Warrior, sharing in the responsibility for being on the look out for and identifying the kind of care described in the Warrior Stories on the following pages. To do so, please consider passing this book on to help others and paying it forward.

# Warrior Stories

From: Jen Barr

After seeing Dr. Scapillato and his team featured on NBC5, I immediately made an appointment for my 13-year-old autistic son, Nolan.

Here is why...

OUR STORY:

My name is Jen and I have a 13-year-old son with autism. My son and I have had many experiences that left me feeling that no one in the medical/dental community is willing to listen to us. I have always felt as if my son and I were...Dismissed. Ignored. Neglected. Isolated.

I dread any medical/dental visit scheduled for my son because his anxiety and stress levels are off the charts- even when the appointment nears. I have tried social stories, visuals-You name it, I've tried it! We both leave medical appointments in distress and dripping with sweat due to a lack of the medical profession understanding his sensory sensitivities. Sometimes I find myself trying to "force" Nolan to stay seated in the chair, relax, and not run away due to sensory overload and fear. This is due to him not feeling comfortable in the setting he is in, which is no fault of his own.

It has been a nightmare! - UNTIL WE FOUND DR. SCAPILLATO!!

My son sat in the doctor's chair for over an hour with minimal or no sensory overload issues to speak of :) THIS IS A FEAT IN ITSELF! I attribute this to not only the

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doctor's care, but also the attentive, sincere, passionate work of the dental hygienist who took care of Nolan, too. She had a thirst for knowledge when it came to my son's specific dental issues as well as my concerns.

The doctor and his team provided the most comprehensive diagnosis and treatment that suits MY son and HIS specific dental needs. The quality of care and comprehensive explanation of oral care at home the hygienist provided went beyond ANY other dental visit explanation we have EVER experienced. The hygienist used state of the art equipment, visuals, and dental models to explain/suggest how I should take care of Nolan's teeth at home. I learned so much about certain bacterias in our mouth, the proper technique to use to brush Nolan's teeth, and the health of every single tooth in Nolan's mouth. It was so eye-opening!

I observed the entire examination...doctor and his team took the time and effort to get to know Nolan first. I felt the compassion the team had for Nolan and the willingness to tackle his dental issues- at Nolan's speed and pace!

Nolan feels more relaxed when someone speaks slowly and clearly, in a soft, calm voice. The hygienist did just that! **We are used to people staring, telling us to go elsewhere, and dismissing us.** We didn't feel that way at Family Dental Care of Oak Park. From the second we checked in at the front desk...I knew this was the place for us :)

Will there be barriers, bumps in the road, issues that come up? Of course!!! BUT I have the utmost confidence that the Doctor and his team will do anything and every-

thing they can to help me help Nolan keep his teeth and gums as healthy as possible.

**WE WILL GET THROUGH THE BARRIERS TOGETHER!**

**Yes, ALL patients deserve high-quality health care, but SPECIAL NEEDS INDIVIDUALS TRULY DESERVE IT!! WE ARE THEIR VOICE!!**

**PLEASE CONTINUE TO DO WHAT YOU DO, DOCTOR SCAPILLATO! WE CANNOT GIVE UP ON THESE SPECIAL INDIVIDUALS OR THEIR SMILES!!**

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***“How do you treat a person with special needs? Like a person.”***

***Tony Danza - actor***

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From: Ellen Lesniak

With all the dentistry that Dr. Scapillato did with our daughter Kathy, he did it with her sitting in my lap. I never had bad experiences myself, through my childhood, and I needed someone like that for Kathy.

Later in her life, she had trouble swallowing. One time when in the office Dr. Scapillato was using the device that sucks the water out of your mouth. Kiddingly, I said to Jim that I needed one of those things for Kathy. He said that he had an old one at home and that he could have it fixed up and let us have it. Until the day that Kathy

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passed away, we had that aspirator that Jim fixed up, with his own money for us to have at home.

The thing about Kathy was that she could smile. She couldn't talk, she couldn't walk, she couldn't verbalize, but she could smile.

Sometimes God puts people on this earth for special reasons. Dr. Scapillato is one of those people.

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From: Robin Fuerner

Dr. Scapillato and his staff always worked to make Julie as comfortable as possible. They asked what things Julie liked. She loved the musical group Abba, specifically the soundtrack to the movie Mama Mia. They went out of their way to make sure that music was available for Julie to listen to on her visits. They would give her a pair of headphones to wear during her visits. It calmed and relaxed her. When she listened, she would clap and yell Mama Mia, Mama Mia. I just loved how she felt like she was at home here.

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From: Michelle Prod

The only option available to us for Matthew was seeing 'regular' dentists. They always struggled with Matthew, and most wouldn't treat him without restraining him, which only made things worse. Matthew never had x-rays of his teeth, because he couldn't sit still long enough. When Matthew turned 18, the dentist we were seeing told me he could no longer see him because he was too old.

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That was a common experience, to get passed on from one dentist to another.

But as long as I took Matthew to the dentist I would ask if I should be seeing a dentist who specializes in special needs patients. I looked and looked, but never found a dentist who was for special needs, until I was referred to Dr. Scapillato. When I first brought Matthew here, I asked if they would restrain him and Dr. Scapillato told me that he did not do that. We were so pleased with how Matthew was being cared for that my entire family jumped ship from the dental practices we were going to and came to Dr. Scapillato.

Jim treated Matthew for a long time, up until he moved into a resident home. He's now seen by a dentist there; but even now, Jim is always asking about Matthew, to make sure he's being cared for properly.



Matthew poses for a picture with Dr. Jim



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From: Maria Sanchez

I called dental office after dental office for my 20-year old daughter Ivelisse. Those that would see her told me that she had many cavities and that they couldn't do the work on her. I felt like I was on an island all alone trying to figure out who was going to take care of these cavities for my daughter.

Despite my daughter's disabilities, she deserves the same kind of care and attention I get. They should not be neglected. I am appalled at how many of these kids get neglected. It was a Godsend finding Dr. Jim.



Ivelisse hugs Dr. Scapillato goodbye as Maria looks on

Raising a severely disabled child can actually have its lighter side. *Disabled Fables* is a collection of fifty-five warm and humorous personal stories about the ups and downs of raising our disabled son Oscar, whom we affectionately refer to as "The O."

The O's lack of social inhibitions has provided ample opportunities for unexpected surprises to occur. For instance, how many kids can heave a foul tasting hamburger into the back of someone's head at the ballpark - and get away with it? Do you know very many people whose dentists deliver hot coffee to their homes? How could you possibly put a positive spin on your kid breaking thirty windows one summer? And you really might not care to know what he did with a cutlet at our local supermarket.

This is a happy book about three decades of unique experiences that could only have occurred from raising such a child. It is a positive message that might be summed up best by a quote from humorist James Thurber: "Humor is emotional chaos remembered in tranquility."

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dan Montville was selected by Pulitzer Prize winning humorist Dave Barry as the 2007 winner of the prestigious Robert Benchley Society Award for Humor. Among Barry's comments

on the author's winning entry: "...Montville goes on to dispense a meandering stream of upbeat and utterly useless advice, never passing up an opportunity to detour from the irrelevant to the even more irrelevant. The only troubling thing about this essay is that it pretty much describes the way I actually write books." The author has also made a special guest appearance with Oprah Winfrey on August 16, 2004 (for jury duty).

