

Today is my daughter's 13th birthday.

Each year, I like to give everyone a little update on how she's doing.

Cathy is about 5'10" tall. She's probably done growing. Her dad is 6'3" and I'm 5'6"...so she's probably a couple of inches taller than I'd expected. She's a big girl, weighing about 170 pounds and wishes she could lose some weight, but she's not willing to get up and move around to work it off.

She attends middle school as a 7th grader where she has 3 Special Day Classes (Reading, Math and Social Studies) and 4 regular ed classes (Science, PE and Two Electives). She gets excellent grades (she got straight A's last semester), however I feel like they cut her too much slack and give her an A for effort rather than achievement. Academically, she's about 2 years behind in reading and one in math. She's actually very good at math, it just takes longer for her to learn new stuff.

Cathy has a cute little group of giggly teenage friends. They are all nice girls (thank goodness), but who knows what the future holds. Most of them are a year older, so she will have some struggles next year as they move on to high school without her.

Cathy struggles most with speech still (putting together sentences in order, word recall, speaking like a 13 year old...etc.). She sees two different speech therapists. We're not giving up yet on speech and will continue getting her as much help as we can. She has started cursing, which is already becoming a battle, one I'm not giving up on. Why is it that a child with speech problems can spell / say every bad word in perfect context with perfect speech?

This year, she fell in love with Kuk Sool. It's a form of martial arts. She has a yellow belt and attends 2X per week. It's awesome for both exercise and self confidence. The teacher is extremely patient and there's only one other student most of the time. This is the first activity she has LOVED so much that she's ready to go before I even tell her to go get her stuff.

She seems to have a very level head, and has great common sense. We'll see how this works out as she starts gaining more independence and making more decisions on her own.

Anyway, I'm very proud of her and so blessed to have such a wonderful daughter. I still see her going on to college (maybe not Stanford, but she'll be fine) and finding a career and eventually starting her own family. It may take her a bit longer than her peers, but I know she will get there.

Mother of Cathy, 06-06-2011