



Since 1969.

A voice for children who face barriers to educational and life opportunities.

With your support, MAC brightens futures for students by advocating for individual children and improving systemic policy. Your gift changes lives....

Meet Alex and learn how advocacy brought hope.

Alex's story: a journey from despair to success. We first met Alex* in 7th grade; he was a bright student with a high IQ and a diagnosis of Autism (Asperger's). He excelled academically, but struggled with social skills and anxiety, making it hard to read social cues and form relationships. Alex would frequently interrupt in class, make off-topic comments, and inadvertently put down his peers.

While Alex got good grades, he bit holes in his shirts, and bit his hands and fingers until they bled. He sat alone at lunch and was becoming increasingly depressed. He cried most nights at home. Alex's teachers tried placing him in a more restrictive setting. Although he could recite rules of appropriate social behavior in his social skills class, he couldn't apply these skills throughout the day.



Alex's mother felt hopeless and scared that he would become increasingly isolated through high school and not be able to go to college despite his high intelligence. Unsure where to turn, she called MAC. The family qualified for pro bono assistance, and so with MAC's help, Alex received evaluations and the assistance of a team of experts who made recommendations for improving his educational program.

From another grateful mother..

"I noticed a tremendous change in Thomas's communication skills [since MAC became involved in our case]. He is more focused, imitating a lot more words, and he is improving on his self-help skills and social skills. With MAC's support, I feel less tension and more confidence to discuss my child's needs in an IEP meeting... You are a blessing to us!"*

- Thomas' mom

As a result of MAC's advocacy, over an intensive two year period, Alex had a highly successful 8th grade year. He developed a very positive relationship with his aide, excelled in honors level math, and came in second place in an 8th grade science fair.

His teachers began commenting that he had become a "team player" which made Alex proud. His disruptive behaviors completely stopped and he made friends for the first time at summer camp. With appropriate services in place, Alex made a very smooth transition to the high school. He did very well on his first report card and his teachers say he is "very well adjusted." **Alex's mother is very pleased with how well he is doing and is now hopeful about his future.**

* Name changed to protect privacy.

2016 Impact*



1,235 Calls
- Up by 25%

Our Helpline staff & volunteers empowered families to advocate for their children.



61 Cases

MAC represented low income children in 2016 to help them get access to services they needed to achieve.



5 Priorities

We advanced equal education policy for children at the statehouse and in Boston Public Schools in five priority areas.

*12 mos. ending 12/1/16

Highlights of our 2016 Annual Accomplishments.

- **MAC's Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI)** has had a major impact on education reform:
 - Locally, TLPI is assisting five schools around the state who are piloting the inquiry based process to create safe and supportive trauma-sensitive schools, that is also being evaluated by an independent research team. Preliminary results have been positive.
 - Statewide, TLPI is co-chairing with the state education department the Safe and Supportive Schools Commission to create the framework and conditions for schools around the state to go through the process to become safe and supportive.
 - Nationally and internationally, TLPI was invited to present about the impact of trauma on learning at a White House conference on girls of color and a UNESCO conference in Bangkok on designing schools for children who do not have access to education.
- **MAC's Autism Center** led a campaign leading to enactment of a new law requiring state Medicaid coverage of non-dedicated assistive technology devices and software, including tablets such as iPads, directly addressing the state's refusal to implement the provisions of the Autism Omnibus Act.
- **The Autism Center** also led advocacy efforts with the state Office of Medicaid to fully implement coverage of ABA services, with 900 children receiving ABA services in the first nine months, working closely with the Autism Insurance Resource Center (AIRC), Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI), and other autism organizations.
- Our **Boston School Reform project** successfully advocated for the School Committee to appoint an Opportunity and Achievement Gap Task force, was appointed to serve on it, and contributed to the recommendations.
- **Boston School Reform** partnered with other civil rights organizations to support the #BlackAtBLS campaign that spotlighted racial discrimination and harassment at Boston Latin School, called for an investigation by the US Attorney's Office, organized community meetings, and served on a BPS committee to address the lack of diversity in the exam schools.
- Our **school discipline coalition** joined with **TLPI** joined together to advocate under the new federal education law that the additional state indicator of school quality focus on school climate and culture. The coalition also identified a loophole in the new school discipline law and advocated with DESE "emergency removals" are included in out-of-school suspension statistics.
- **Proyecto Acceso a la Educación Especial** entered its second year of helping Spanish-speaking parents of children with disabilities understand the laws in order to better advocate for their children. Learn more and help support this critically-needed new initiative: <http://massadvocates.org/proyecto-acceso/>.
- **MAC's B-SET project** reorganized into a "collective impact" model of systems change to begin implementation of the action plan to improve post-secondary career and employment pathways for Boston youth with disabilities. Nearly 60 organizations including major city, state and community stakeholders are working together.
- The **Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (ICEI)** continued to increase access to higher education for over 250 older youth with autism and intellectual disabilities through 16 public colleges and universities and 59 school districts.
- **MAC's Young Adult Fellow** developed a series of online videos focused on self-advocacy for youth, families, and professionals: <http://massadvocates.org/youngadultleadersfellowship>.

Brighten a child's future: www.massadvocates.org/donate

All donations are tax deductible.



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