

## Patrick - 13 and a Spelling Bee Marvel

Patrick Flaherty is 13 years old and is in the seventh grade at the Voorhees Middle School. At the age of 2 Patrick was diagnosed with PDD/NOS. He had 40 hours per week of one-on-one ABA therapy, in the home, from the time he turned three years old. Patrick didn't speak or make eye contact prior to that therapy. His speech developed around the age of four, but it was a slow and difficult process. The most amazing thing about Pat is that he



read without being taught! He would read and spell very large words at a very young age and we were always amazed as well as entertained!

Patrick has made great strides in his development and he continues to evolve into a sweet and caring young man. His most recent and most exciting accomplishment was being asked to participate in the seventh grade spelling bee at the Voorhees Middle School. About 25 students were selected from the entire seventh grade class. Pat's spelling is excellent,

and we wonder if it has to do with his ability to read at a very young age. He did very well in the spelling bee and made it to round four. He didn't misspell his word, he just transposed two of the letters in the word. When he got the word wrong, he accepted it very well. All the kids clapped and cheered for him and I was moved to tears. His smile lit up the room! What a priceless experience that was for Patrick, myself, and my husband. It truly is the little things in life that mean so much. I'm happy that I could share this experience with all of you.