

## Supporting Parent Volunteers:

We look for parents or grandparents, who can listen with empathy, because they have shared in a similar experience, and are now in a different place than when they first learned of their child's diagnosis.

~ Generally speaking a parent is not ready to become a Supporting Parent too soon after the initial diagnosis.

~ Supporting Parents have had the opportunity to go through the process of adjustment, and different emotional states, and feel more in control of their lives than when their child was first diagnosed.

~ Supporting Parents generally recognize the strengths of their child and family, rather than focus on what they cannot do.

~ Supporting Parents have learned to balance the daily routines, with the unexpected events/crises, while recognizing that they, too, need to reach out for support at times.

~ Many Supporting Parents have had the opportunity to be in a Peer Match as a Referred Parent, and therefore recognize the importance of this kind of unique support.

~ A Supporting Parent's desire to support another parent is not self-directed, but a gift from the heart.

~ Many parents become Supporting Parents because they want to "give back", in gratitude for the support and help that they received.

~ Some parents become Supporting Parents because they have experienced isolation and want to ensure that no other parent has to go the journey alone.

~ We hope that a new Supporting Parent can commit a minimum of one year to our Parent to Parent Match Program, but we understand that family circumstances may require some adjustments in availability.

~ The role of a Supporting Parent is not one of a professional counselor, but rather as a peer mentor, sharing experiences and resources, and helping the parent/family as they work through the new challenges.

~ Support Parents are aware of the importance of acceptance of diversity and are non-judgmental in their actions and words.

~ The relationship that the SP and Referred Parent develop is unique in each match, but the gift you give – "Your caring and support" will live on forever in their hearts.