

Parent Testimonial 2:

November 2025

My daughter is neurodivergent (like everyone in our family) and is often referred to as “quirky” and an “old soul”. She is extremely creative and enjoys expressing her creativity through many mediums- art, painting, multimedia, etc. She is happiest spending time outdoors in nature moving her body, whether going on hikes, swimming in a lake, or looking for wildflowers and mushrooms.

She has always had a love/hate relationship with school that mirrors her personality; she is very extroverted with friends, but introverted and shy in the classroom. Her teachers have often commented that she underestimates her abilities and she was constantly comparing herself to her peers. She has difficulty remaining focused and if she lost her place or didn't understand something she was being taught she wouldn't seek out or ask for help for fear of being teased or called “stupid” and bringing unwanted attention to herself. She also came out as lgbtq at a young age. She knew she didn't care for gender norms and was attracted to people for who they were- their substance- rather than gender. This created another layer of anxiety for her at school as it was a siren-call for bullies and teasing, which sadly included both students and staff. By middle school her grades dropped dramatically, and mentally she was in a very precarious state. She was struggling to find acceptance and safety and hitting walls at every turn. She was feeling hopeless and dejected and I was at a loss for how to help.

When the opportunity to attend Pride Learning Academy became a possibility I jumped. Here was a school where she didn't have to sit at a desk all day. She could go outside and be in nature. She could learn her core subjects in a smaller group of various abilities and ages and know she wouldn't be judged just for asking for help or an alternative explanation. Here was a school where she would be supported and even encouraged to just be her beautiful, creative, expressive *best self*.

Since attending Pride Learning Academy, her self-esteem has improved significantly. Her confidence in her ability to learn and understand her core subjects- in particular math- has really grown. She loves that spending time learning outdoors is part of the school's philosophy and that there are always opportunities for her to express herself creatively; from learning how to make a “zine” to painting and tie dying shirts to sell at PLA's booth at the Farmer's Market. Mx. Wilder has created a truly unique and much needed learning space for kids like mine to feel free from bullying and judgement. A place for kids to thrive and be their *best self*. I am truly grateful for Pride Learning Academy and Mx. Leo Wilder.

Parent of student currently enrolled at Pride Learning Academy, age 13