

Letters About Literature Winner - Nebraska - Tayler Hough

Level II Winner

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Dear Ann M. Martin,

Do you ever have connections with books that are so strong, you find yourself thinking about the book for days? After reading A Corner of the Universe, I found myself pondering the many ways that I can relate to the book. The touching story of autism helped me to better understand my autistic cousin, Ryan. In addition, it sparked my thinking of how we could spread the word of autism awareness.

Your book helped me to think of what autism is and how it affects the lives of the many people that have it. It seems as though so many people do not care about the many needs of people with autism. Autism has the potential to reach four million Americans in some way over the next decade. This problem is rapidly growing and I feel as though we need to sit down and learn more about it. Your book can help so many to see what they can do to make a difference. I have personally witnessed people (who do not clearly understand him,) not talking to my cousin, Ryan, because they think he could not comprehend or communicate back. This is very depressing and is hurting his ability to learn how to speak to others.

In your story, Hattie plays the perfect example. She sees Adam as a normal person, her uncle, and best friend. Adam behaves the best and learns the most with Hattie. This sets a great example on how we should act with autistic people. When Adam is around his parents, they act embarrassed of him. The way they act toward him makes him act up. Americans need to be more respectful to people with autism. It seems as though because they have a disability, they are not human. We need to treat them as anyone else and we will see an amazing acceleration in their learning.

Your book has caused me to want to take action. If everyone in America were to read your book, things would change. I think that it is a great way for people to be learning about real life from a realistic story. There is currently an autism awareness

fund that could benefit greatly if more would be interested in the cause. I would be very interested in requesting your book in a book club, like Oprah's for example. As my mom is a speech pathologist, I am also exploring any career options I may have to work with people with autism.

I am thrilled because I have finally found someone that really understands. It seems as though so many people go on with their hectic lives, never giving a second glance to autism. But I can tell you do, along with many talented teachers and parents who have devoted their lives to helping people with autism. Now, for those millions of busy bodies who might just sit down with your book, they too can take a minute to understand the lives of autistic people. Thank you!

Respectfully yours,  
Tayler Hough