

## Parents provide for life

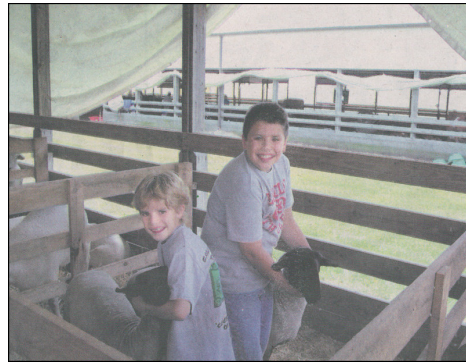
Aaron Zibricky: Autistic youth builds life and friendship through 4-H club

By Janet Lundquist  
STAFF WRITER

NEW LENOX -- Aaron Zibricky is autistic, but many of his friends don't even know it.

The 12-year-old New Lenox boy has been involved with the Lucky Clovers 4-H Club for more than a year. The experience has not only taught him skills and brought him friendships, it has given him inspiration for his life's work, his parents said.

Every day this summer, Zibricky and other 4-H members would visit Linda Swiercynsky's Mokena farm to take care of their sheep. Aaron's sheep, Star, won a ribbon for Reserve Grand Champion at the Will County Fair.



The calming, natural atmosphere and repetitive tasks on the farm form the perfect environment for Aaron, said his parents, Greg and Dawn Zibricky.

"You just see him light up. He seems so much calmer when he's with the animals," Dawn said. "Mostly he's motivated. He's so motivated to work. This really gives him something to look forward to."

When Aaron was diagnosed nine years ago, doctors told his parents that he would likely end up in an institution when he got older.

The Zibrickys refused to take the doctor's opinion on their son's future to heart. But they did take it as a call to action.

They decided to create a plan for Aaron's life, anticipating he will live long into adulthood.

"Medical advances and technology allow people to live much longer. Down Syndrome kids, their life expectancy has doubled in the last 25 years. They're going to outlive their parents," Greg said.

Dawn quit her job as a university professor to work as a nurse at Aaron's school. Greg, a financial planner, started researching a financial plan to provide for his son's future -- searching for information and support he never had to find before.

Together the Zibrickys created Provide Care For Life, a company dedicated to helping families create life plans for their disabled children, including things such as education and employment skills, guardianship, and public assistance programs.

Greg's Frankfort-based company Provider Group, Ltd. helps families deal with legal issues, financial and estate planning -- with personal sensitivity to families trying to figure out how to care for their disabled children well into adulthood.

"Whether its social issues, employment, housing, health insurance .... these are all major issues for a population that is bigger than you and I can imagine," Greg said.

Ten years from now, the Zibrickys envision their son living the life he always wanted.

"Hopefully part of his dream will be his reality, and that will be that he lives in a rural community," Dawn said. "He will probably need some assistance. He will probably be mostly independent. But that's kind of where I see him."

The Zibrickys recently celebrated the launch of their Web site, [providecareforlife.com](http://providecareforlife.com).

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