DRAKE LEONG, FATHER OF BOOKSHARE STUDENT MEMBER KEVIN LEONG, TALKS ABOUT KEVIN'S READING CHALLENGES AND HOW BOOKSHARE HAS HELPED KEVIN OVERCOME THEM.

I'M DRAKE LEONG. MY SON IS KEVIN LEONG.

LIFE BEFORE BOOKSHARE WAS VERY DIFFICULT. WHEN KEVIN WAS IN KINDERGARTEN HE HAD AN ORGANIC BRAIN INJURY AND IT AFFECTED HIS VISION. IT AFFECTED IT DRAMATICALLY. HE WAS IN A COMA FOR 2 WEEKS AND HE, WHEN HE CAME OUT HE HAD TO RELEARN TO WALK, AND RELEARN TO USE THE BATHROOM. AND HE HAD TO RELEARN TO DO EVERYTHING.

AFTER KEVIN'S BRAIN INJURY, AND THERE WERE SEVERAL YEARS THAT WENT BY WHERE KEVIN STRUGGLED IN SCHOOL. HE REALLY HAD A DIFFERENT TIME READING, SO ANY KIND OF PRINT READING WAS VERY DIFFICULT FOR TRACKING. BUT THE PROBLEM WAS WHEN YOU HAVE NORMAL SIZE PRINT IN THE CLASSROOMS, HE WOULD REALLY STRUGGLE. AND HE JUST WOULDN'T READ. HE WOULDN'T READ AT ALL.

WHEN HE WAS 2ND AND 3RD GRADE HE WAS FREQUENTLY, AT LEAST ONE YEAR BEHIND IN THE CLASS, AS FAR AS READING LEVEL AND WRITING SKILLS. SO ONCE WE LEARNED HOW TO USE BOOKSHARE AND WE GOT IT ONLINE FOR HIM IT REALLY WAS VERY BENEFICIAL. BECAUSE HE DIDN'T HAVE TO SEE THE NORMAL PRINT. HE COULD ENLARGE THE PRINT ON HIS COMPUTER OR ON HIS IPAD. AND HE COULD HAVE HIGH CONTRAST. SO HE WOULD ALWAYS HAVE BLACK AND WHITE, OR WHITE ON BLACK. AND THE HIGH CONTRAST WAS VERY HELPFUL FOR HIM AS WELL AS THE LARGE PRINT. AND IT ALLOWED HIM MORE INDEPENDENCE SO HE COULD TAKE IT WITH HIM. AND NOW THAT HE'S A LITTLE BIT OLDER HE EVEN CARRIES IT WITH HIM. SO HE CARRIES IT WITH HIS IPHONE. AND HE CAN PULL IT OUT AND WHENEVER HE'S SITTING SOMEWHERE WAITING FOR US TO PICK HIM UP AFTER SCHOOL, OR WAITING SOMEWHERE IN A GROCERY STORE OR WHATEVER, HE JUST PULLS OUT HIS PHONE AND HE'LL JUST START READING.

BUT WHEN HE'S VERY TIRED HE CAN ALSO JUST TURN IT ON AND IT WILL READ TO HIM. SO HE CAN STILL LISTEN AND HE CAN GET THE BOOK, AND HE CAN GET THE GIST OF IT, AND THAT'S VERY HELPFUL AS WELL FOR SCHOOL. SO HE'S ABLE TO KEEP UP WITH THE READING AND KEEP UP WITH THE MATERIALS. AND IT REALLY HELPS HIM BE VERY CONFIDENT. AND SO HE IS STAYING ON PAR WITH THE CLASS. AND HE'S ACTUALLY AHEAD OF HIS GRADE. WHEREAS BEFORE WE HAD BOOKSHARE HE WAS FALLING WAY BEHIND. AND HE HAS TO TRY HARDER THAN ANYBODY ELSE. HE REALIZES THAT. BECAUSE HE HAS A DISABILITY HE HAS TO TRY HARDER. HE KNOWS THAT HE HAS TO WORK HARDER. AND IT'S DIFFICULT, BECAUSE HE SEES HIS LITTLE BROTHER AND HIS LITTLE BROTHER DOESN'T HAVE TO TRY VERY HARD. AND HE JUST CAN ALWAYS KEEP UP. AND THE BEAUTIFUL THING IS THAT HE WANTS TO DO WELL.

SO I WOULD LIKE TO TELL PARENTS IF THEY HAVE A CHILD THAT HAS A PRINT DISABILITY, TO GIVE BOOKSHARE A TRY. AND THE ACCESSIBILITY AND THE PORTABILITY IS WONDERFUL. BECAUSE THEY CAN ACCESS IT ANYWHERE. AND THEY CAN HAVE IT ON GO, AND IT CAN HELP THEM READ VERY EASILY. ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO LEARN AND PERSEVERE AND CONTINUE TO BE HOPEFUL.