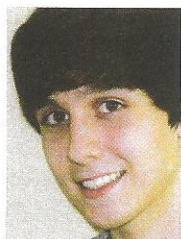
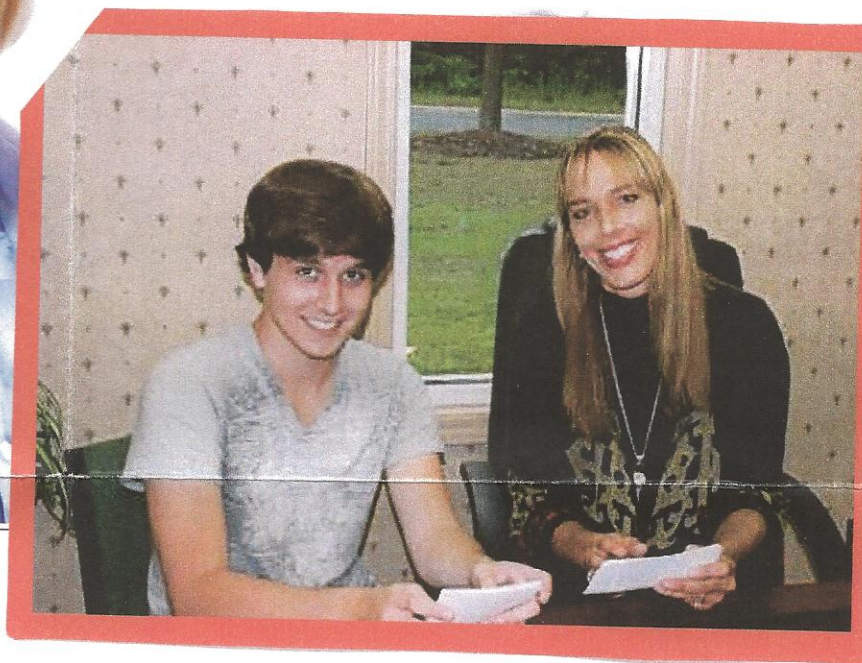


YOUR Teen™

for parents

INTERNET MONITORING
Safety vs. Privacy

DR. OZ



CHRISTIAN ROBERTS

For many rising ninth graders, high school promises fascinating opportunities to establish new friendships. For me, high school conjured feelings of dread and anxiety.

This was because, unlike my peers, I struggled socially. I was unable to make connections with others, and my school days were spent sitting alone in the back of the classroom, praying that the teacher would not call on me. To make things worse, I suffered from severe Attention Deficit Disorder, which caused me to say awkward things on the rare occasions that a classmate struck up a conversation with me. By the middle of tenth grade, my social life had worsened, leaving me with only a few distant friends. I had no real outlets, and I spent most of my free time playing video games or arguing with my parents. Tenth grade was painful, and something needed to change.

I began to ponder what I could do differently. This was not easy, for I had dug myself into a deep social and academic hole. Over the next few weeks, I tried to strike up conversations with people and participate in classroom discussions. My efforts did not help because I had acquired a reputation for being the strange kid who said inappropriate things in a feeble attempt to be funny.

After many failed attempts to turn things around, I consulted with Beatrice Hair, Executive Director of the Salisbury Tutoring Academy, a one-on-one tutoring school. Wanting to transform my life, I swallowed my pride and started working with the program. Mrs. Hair, noting my eccentric characteristics, suggested that I join my school drama club. As our conversation continued, I became increasingly more convinced that the drama club might be the place for me. The next day, I signed up for the club and immediately began participating in their activities. I was surprised with how quickly things began

to improve; people noticed me as being more than just "that weird guy," and I started forming friendships. For the rest of tenth grade, I assisted with the club productions, gaining recognition from everyone around me. My efforts in the club paid off, and at the end of the school year, I was elected as the drama club vice president. I was overjoyed at this accomplishment, and for the first time since elementary school, I actually looked forward to the start of school.

Throughout eleventh grade, things continued to improve. I made more friends and improved my social skills. I was cast in a lead role in one of our school plays, and I could not have been more pleased. After the production, I was invited to go out to eat with the cast. Looking back to who I was in ninth and tenth grade, it feels almost surreal seeing how much things have improved. Now entering my senior year of high school, I can only look forward to the great things yet to come.