

## Archiving Resiliency Through Youth Testimony

### James' Story of Resiliency

- **Introduction:** My name is James. I am 12 years old and am going into the 7th grade. I like football and I hope to play on my school team this fall. I'm a big fan of Family Guy and my animals. I have 3 cats, 4 birds, 5 fish, 2 hamsters, 2 guinea pigs and a dog. I like wrestling with my younger brother and I like to watch it on TV.
- **My Journey:** I've had a lot of challenges in school because of my illness. I've been suspended several times. I have a hard time paying attention in class and settling down to do my work, although I'm getting much better at this. I was on some medication when I was about 4 until I was 10 1/2 that hurt my liver, so now I can't take any medication to help with my illness. I used to have some trouble making friends, but now I have lots
- **Educate:** Living with ADHD is a bummer. I get really frustrated and mad sometimes because I can't understand things and then I bust out windows. Sometimes I feel like my teachers think I can control my behavior, but I can't. I've tried to explain this to them, but they don't listen to me.
- **Resilience:** When I'm upset at school I go to the office and sit by myself for awhile until I cool down; at home I play video games to help me calm down. My dad helps me cope by taking me to his house and spending time with me, and I like his dogs. They lick my face and help me feel better. My friends help me, too. I like to go hang out with them and play video games. I really struggled when my dad was out of my life. I wrote him letters and visited him and told him I missed him. Now I get to see him on a regular basis. In order to stay tough and resilient, I play my video games, play with my dog, and work out.
- **Barriers to resilience:** Sometimes people's attitudes towards my illness get in the way of my being resilient. A lot of people don't think ADHD is a real illness, and they treat me like I should do better than I do. People who yell and scream make me very upset, even if they're not yelling at me. So I try to stay away from people like this. If people were more understanding of me and my illness, life would be better.
- **My advice to others:** Don't be scared, you can handle this, too. Do what you need to do to feel better. Play games, hang out with your friends and relax.
- **What others can do to help:** People could help me by letting me talk to them and explain how their actions and behaviors make me feel worse. I'd like it if they would listen to me. Friends and support groups help my mom cope with my illness.