



FIRSTSERVES TRAINING TRANSFORMS STUDENT'S BUS RIDE EXPERIENCE

The mother of a Glenbard Special Education student struggled daily to get her daughter, Suzy, on the bus. This would set the tone for her entire day, often interfering with her ability to focus in the classroom.

When driver Janalee implemented research-based interventions in collaboration with the district, Suzy's mom could finally watch her daughter head to school with a smile on her face.

First Student van driver, Janalee, was determined to better meet Suzy's needs and make her ride less scary and more enjoyable. Janalee and First Student leadership worked together to evaluate Suzy's ride experience.

Each morning, Janalee got out of the van and greeted Suzy as she boarded. In order to calm her nerves, she connected with Suzy's parents and used a technique called a Social Story that she had learned as part of her First Student training. Suzy loved books, so Janalee brought in a collection of books for Suzy's aide to read to her during the ride. Janalee genuinely cares for her students, and their progress brings her endless joy.



“Watching them grow warms my heart. This is what I was meant to do,” she says.

Because of Janalee's extra care, Suzy began to look forward to her commute. Instead of feeling anxious each morning, she went out her front door and ran to the bus. Suzy's teachers were able to work with her more effectively, because her positive transportation experience allowed her to arrive to school ready to work on her educational goals. Suzy's mother was finally able to leave for work each morning with a peace of mind, knowing that her child was calm and happy.

