

# ROCKING OUR KIDS AT CHRISTMAS

## **Mario's Jesus Blanket**

One Christmas Eve service, Gay Crede, Cunningham Chaplain, decorated the worship table in the Spiritual Life Center in a special way -- with a gift she had received from one of our kids. During a prior Wednesday night chapel service, 12-year-old Mario\* couldn't wait to give it to her.

"Mario ran up to me and said, 'I have something I want to show you,'" Chaplain Gay explained. "He had it wrapped in a gift bag with a note. It was a big deal to him and very, very sweet."



The note read:

*Dear Chaplain Gay,*

*I thought you might like this blanket cause a new Jesus blanket would make the chapel better and prettier. And this Jesus blanket is not just any blanket; it's made with lots of love. And I'm sure you'll find it useful."*

*Love, Mario*

Mario sometimes has trouble focusing and completing tasks and assignments. Because of the abuse and neglect he's endured, he suffers from Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder (DMDD).

Children with DMDD have severe and frequent temper tantrums that interfere with their ability to function at home, in school or with others. Mario has a history of head banging and outbursts of anger. His therapists at Cunningham were seeing some small signs of autism as well.

"There are a lot of activities that Mario can focus on and finish as long as they have meaning to him," his staff member, Kellen, explained. "The project just needs to connect with him."

Spirituality and the true meaning of Christmas connected with Mario.

"Mario is very good in the spiritual groups I hold for our kids," Chaplain Gay said. "He participates and stays focused. He very much knows about the Bible and knows how to look up passages by himself. The Jesus blanket he made has the Star of David on it and even a cupcake with a candle in it to celebrate Jesus' birthday."

"The Jesus blanket was his idea," Kellen said. "He makes things and gives them to staff all of the time but never with such great detail. The Jesus blanket even surprised us. It was obvious he put some real feeling and thought into it. Sometimes, I think we've got to give him more credit than we do. He is really thriving. He's just amazing."

*\*Names are changed to protect the privacy of Our Kids.*

**THANK YOU** for rocking **Our Kids**, like Mario, with your prayers and gifts this Christmas.

*Aligning ministries that meet children and families "where they are"*

*Restoring hope and bringing healing to broken lives*

*Moving children and families to love themselves and others*

*Supporting children and families in becoming all God has created them to be*



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