



Family Resource, Information & Education Network
for Down Syndrome • Frederick County, Maryland



Press Release

February 21, 2013

Reference: Robert Ethan Saylor incident, F.R.I.E.N.D.S. official statement

8:00am (EST)

Regarding the January 12th tragic incident involving Mr. Robert Ethan Saylor and the off-duty Frederick County Sheriff's deputies, who were working as security personnel at the Westview Promenade Shopping Center, the Family Resource Information and Education Network for Down Syndrome (F.R.I.E.N.D.S.) has remained cautiously quiet awaiting the outcome of the ongoing investigations. However, because of the huge public outcries and the overwhelming social media inquiries, which F.R.I.E.N.D.S. has received, in addition to those from within the Down syndrome community, we feel it necessary to finally break our silence.

First, let us say that our hearts and prayers go out Ethan's family for their great and sudden loss. F.R.I.E.N.D.S. is here to support the Saylor family in any way we can. Second, we have been in the past, and will continue to be, strong supporters of the Frederick County Sheriff's Office.

It is unfortunate that this incident happened and we believe that after all of the investigations are complete, the right decisions will be made on behalf of the Saylor family. Our intent is to not interfere in the investigations and allow the facts to be presented. Once all of the facts are known, we as an organization will determine what our next steps will be. Meanwhile, F.R.I.E.N.D.S. would like to encourage law enforcement and other emergency personal to explore further training in dealing with individuals with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities. These individuals may have additional anatomical characteristics which may place them at greater risk for unintentional harm.

When an individual with developmental disabilities is challenged in our society, efforts must be made to patiently work with them to resolve the situation. The additional time may allow the individual to further process the situation and transition into a calmer state which may eliminate the need for unnecessary force.

F.R.I.E.N.D.S. is a voice for all individuals with Down syndrome. We will continue to educate, advocate, and raise awareness about Down syndrome within our local communities and across the nation. For further information please visit our website at www.friendsoffredco.org.

Signed,

F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Board of Directors