



Twelve years...It can be a lot of things to different people. For some, it's how many years since they graduated high school. Maybe for you it's how long you've been married. For yet someone else, it might be how long they've been in their current job or field. For Colleen, it's *half her life*. For Colleen's parents, it's twelve years too long. Why you ask? Colleen is on Maryland's DDA Waiting List, a long neglected waiting list of almost 19,000 citizens left behind waiting for much needed services. More on the waiting list later but now back to Colleen's family.

They have lived in Frederick for 30 years. Their thirty year old son battles ADHD and is on his own. Margie and her husband would like to do more for their son; however, they must devote so much time to Colleen's care. Colleen is 26 and lives at home. Colleen has an intellectual disability, microcephaly, a speech and language deficit and a seizure disorder. She likes to be very independent and do things for herself, but she doesn't understand danger - she can't cross a street by herself and is a hazard in the kitchen. She will always need direct supervision.

Colleen has never had normal sleep patterns. As a young child, she was always up for a few hours in the middle of the night. So was Margie. Around November or December of this past year, the question asking increased in frequency. She was waking Margie up five, six, eight times per night. Margie honestly doesn't remember much from that time except that she had constant headaches and low grade nausea – her body's response to chronic sleep deprivation. Apparently tests have shown that drivers who are sleep deprived are just as impaired as those who are intoxicated. Great! Margie was a walking time bomb to kill someone.....But this didn't constitute a crisis according to the State of Maryland.

Colleen has been on the Waiting List for 12 years – almost half her life. She is still in the category of Current Request. Respite care funding would be such a huge help in her case. What makes this whole situation even more frightening is Colleen is one of the easier individuals to live with. Most of the families on that waiting list are living lives of quiet desperation. Let's give families hope for the next twelve years by ending the wait now for these families.  
***END THE WAIT NOW!***