



## **Gabriella Silver**

Montgomery County resident Gabriella Silver has spent every day of her life - 18 years - with either her mother or father by her side. "That means my husband and I have never been away together in that time for even a weekend," her mother, Janice, points out.

Born with quadriplegia cerebral palsy and deafness, Gabi uses a wheelchair and depends upon her parents for all her daily self-care skills. She relies on sign language for receptive communication and she expresses her thoughts through a computer communication device.

Despite these challenges, Gabi is a very motivated and persistent learner in school. She also loves swimming, horseback riding, exploring museums, and spending time with other teenagers.

The time invested in Gabi's care has strained her parents' work productivity, and their financial and emotional resources. They have shouldered the expense of most of her therapies (speech, physical, occupational), and have had to pay for hearing aids and other adaptive equipment (gait trainers, lifts, standers) without help from insurance or DDA. The physical demands of her care have gotten harder as they've gotten older.

But what hurts them most is that Gabi may have no funding for minimal vital services after she graduates. Says Janice, "it should not be thought a luxury for those with disabilities to have access to vocational services and a decent place to live. It is shameful that in the richest county in the world, we allow the disabled to be disproportionately discriminated against."

Please invest in the resolution of the issue before the damage becomes even more overwhelming. Invest in citizens of Maryland with developmental disabilities. [www.endthewaitnow.com](http://www.endthewaitnow.com)

### **Developmental Disabilities Coalition**

*Dedicated to the rights and quality of life of people with developmental disabilities in Maryland*