

# Snapshot of Success...

## *Elise Watson*



*Like so many Western New Yorkers, I always “knew” about St. Mary’s School for the Deaf (SMSD). “It’s that school over there on Main St., somewhere near Sister’s Hospital, right?”*

*So it was then in May 2001, that I needed to know what SMSD was all about. You see, it was at that time that one of my 4 month old twins was diagnosed as being deaf. That summer, our family first stepped foot on the campus of SMSD. It has been 11 years since that initial tour and my first impressions still hold true today.*

***SMSD is a one stop shop for the children who go there and their families!***

*It was easy to see that my daughter, Elise would be in an environment rich in language and in an atmosphere suited best for her as well as the other students of the school to learn and succeed in spite of their deafness. Their program includes the professionals that would be able to provide the other services that Elise would require such as PT and OT. Instead of disrupting her routine for such appointments, it would become part of it.*

*This was all so new to me. I had never really been around deaf people before, let alone know anything about the deaf culture. As a hearing parent of a deaf child, I needed to gain an understanding of what Elise’s life would be like given her deafness; how it was going to impact my life and that of the whole family; and what we needed to do to better communicate with her to insure her success and happiness. Through the Parent’s Center, I was able to start to address these concerns; take sign language classes; and meet and network with other parents.*

*I have often wondered what Elise’s life would be like if she didn’t have the opportunity to go to school at SMSD; what struggles she would be encountering. She is a beautiful, happy, well-adjusted girl. She is just one of the kids; able to easily communicate with her friends and teachers and is not someone who is isolated by her disability. - Jo Ann Watson, Parent*

