

**Broad
Ripple,
Indiana**

GRADUATION

RG'S STORY



Today is the last paragraph in the second chapter of RG's life.

His first chapter ended with an autism diagnosis in June 2019, which left us unsure of everything we had constructed in our minds for RG's future. Already involved in speech and OT, we researched our options, applied for the waiver, and toured ABA facilities. After meeting Beth at Bierman, I knew that this would be the place for RG.

Upon his first assessment, we knew just how steep the climb for him would be. At the age of 3, he had the receptive skills of a 10-month-old and the expressive skills of a 1 yr. old. His only true word was "baby," when he met his sister Flora for the first time. His lack of communication skills left him in frequent meltdowns, banging his head into walls and flopping down to the ground in frustration. He subsisted on cheese sticks, yogurt, tomatoes, and Velveeta mac and cheese. He could not tell us when he was hungry, thirsty, needed to use the bathroom, or was tired.

5 YEARS OLD AT GRADUATION



Phone: 800-931-8113

<https://www.biermanautism.com>



Therapy Hours: 70+



Change Harders: 500+



Unique Programs: 70+

With Bierman from 2019 - 2022

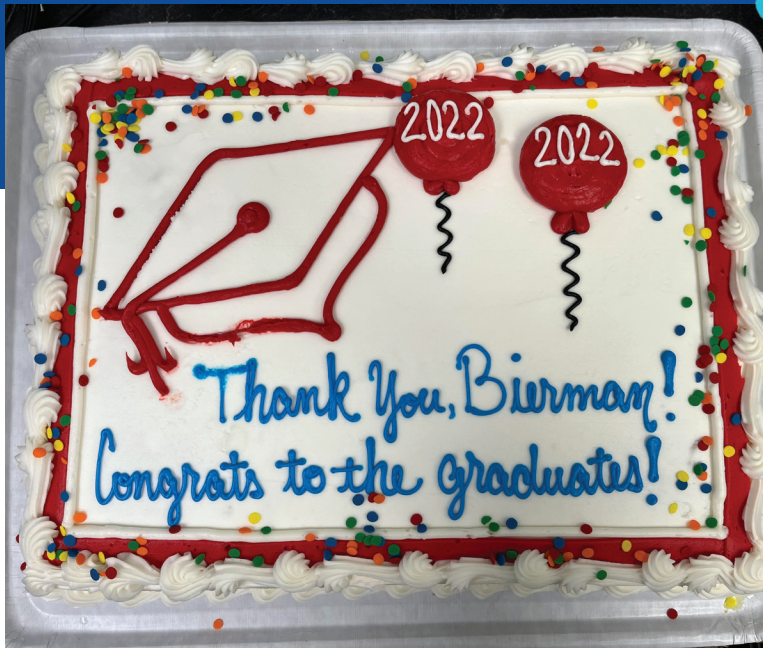
He started at Bierman on September 18, 2019, just after his third birthday. Equipped with his Daniel Tiger backpack and lunch, none of us knew what this therapy would do for RG. It's one thing to read about applied behavioral analysis in books, or read the feedback of others on FB pages, but to learn and live the principles is another thing entirely. Not only that, but the hour-long trip from our home in Shelby County to Broad Ripple marked a four-hour commitment in the car each day. We would be orienting our family's life around this decision.

We immersed ourselves in early intervention for what we'd hope could give RG the words and the skills that other therapies had previously been unable to touch in a substantial way. Ellen, Meg, Maddie, and Audrey were there to greet us on his first day, and we instantly felt surrounded by a group of BTs that cared for our boy in a special way. Libby, from day 1, always reassured us and left us feeling that RG had achievable and thoughtfully crafted goals in his treatment plan. I could not have picked a better BCBA to have started our journey.

Within 2 weeks, he was able to label horse, apple, banana, ball, house, wagon, bubbles, straw, pants, and spoon. That kind of progress was made time and time again. And, despite the movement to in-home ABA for 11 weeks in 2020 due to the pandemic, RG continued to make huge strides. We started and conquered potty training. We expanded our dietary interests, we progressed from vocal to verbal, we learned to imitate and pretend, we learned to play with and enjoy others (and our sister), we learned to advocate for ourselves, we learned to draw and write, we learned to find healthier ways to express frustration and anger, and so much more. Above and beyond, Libby helped RG to complete his level 3 swim class after the instructors had held him back for 2 years (chicken, star, rocket!). She, along with Sammie, helped him to master basic soccer skills for his soccer team. Katie, Jaclyn, and Matthew worked with RG get his first haircut and feel comfortable at the dentist. Now, we don't dread going out to community gatherings thanks to the hard work of so many BTs over the years.

We can only stand before you today because of the work done at Bierman. The employees here have taken our little boy and turned him into a young man full of promise and abilities.

To Libby, we, hands down, would not be here without you. You built the firm foundation that allowed all of the "level 3 skills" to happen. **You provided an avenue for us to be heard and supported; you made it possible for us as parents to learn how to help RG at home; you & Beth fought alongside us when insurance wanted to cut RG's hours; you always pushed RG in the most wonderful ways—even when it involved us going through the "hour-long" process of getting into the car at the end of the day.**



To SO many BTs:

Maddie (who has always had a smile on her face, and who has been with RG since the beginning, THANK YOU!) Your energy and enthusiasm for these kids is unparalleled. If you get tired, you never show it.

Shaidra (Shai), who traveled to and from Fishers for 11 weeks to work with RG during the pandemic. She weathered some of the worst of the potty training, all while pregnant, and she was always so patient with RG. She also logged RG's first 300 mind day ☐ I remember how we celebrated!

Megan: I can truly say that you've cared for RG like he was your own. You've always been willing to give me lots of great feedback, and I know that you will be an amazing BCBA!

Nazjai: who started the desensitization of RG to people combing and tying back his hair. Her styling of RG's hair will always be legendary. She was also always firm and committed to showing zero reaction to RG's behaviors, which takes a VERY strong constitution.

Sammie: who really started to lay the foundation for classroom work from her past as a preschool teacher. Again, so patient and nurturing as we started to transition from basic skills to classroom readiness.

Jaclyn/Matthew: this dynamic duo brings us too today. Without the work of you both, I am convinced that we would not have been able to accomplish the MAJOR goal of getting RG's hair cut. 6-8 months+ of intensive work on this program led to the most uneventful/successful trip to the salon. You've both been pivotal in the classroom readiness phase of our journey, and I feel confident that RG will be well-prepared to tackle kindergarten because of the way you've conducted the peer interaction sessions.



To **Matthew**, specifically, you are the first and only male BT that RG had routinely. When he first started at Bierman, he was very fearful of men. I can safely say that that barrier is long gone. He has learned so much from you, including how to hang off any piece of playground equipment, go super high on the swings, and to love Star Wars & light saber duels.

Other notables, **Sydnee, Danielle, Marlee, Riley, Caitlyn, Susie, Ellen, Johnny, Danoashley**, and others whose names I'm forgetting but were no less important. I've heard these names uttered by RG multiple times, so I know you made an impression on him.

To our final BCBA, **Katie**, thank you for bringing us across the finish line. Thank you for being humble and supporting us as we move into the public school system. Thank you for integrating our every concern into RG's treatment plan/ DDS. Thank you for seeing us through the scary haircut process!

This isn't the end, but the start of chapter 3! We will miss each and every one of you. Thank you for everything you do to help these kids reach their full potential and accomplish what so many thought impossible. I hope that we can stay in touch and visit in the future.

And last, but not least, RG: your mom and dad are so pleased with the young man you're growing up to be. You've weathered 2+ hours in the car every day for nearly 3 years. (which amounts to roughly 65 days in the car, over the last 36 months) You are our superhero- far better than Superman, Spiderman, Thor, or the Hulk combined. We can't wait to see what God has in store for you. We love you and are so happy that you're getting the opportunity to share your unique perspective and joyful disposition with the world.

"You are unique, You are special, and You are wonderful"

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