



Liene Hofmane's son, Kurts, joined The Garth School in 2012.

Liene wanted a school that would treat Kurts like the unique individual that he is.

A Life Changing Decision

Kurts' story began thousands of miles away from Spalding, in Latvia. Before Kurts and his Mum moved to the town, he attended a hospital appointment in Latvia at the age of 3 years. Kurts was diagnosed with high level ASD, significant Global Developmental Delay, ADHD and Epilepsy. Liene was asked that day if she wanted to leave her son with them.

Shocked at the question, Liene took her son home and began to research Kurts' diagnosis and look into Nursery Schools and Primary Schools. It quickly transpired that unless she lived in a major city in Latvia and could also pay privately, there would be very poor provision for Kurts.



**THE SPALDING
SPECIAL SCHOOLS**

Achieving Together

The Big Move

After an immense amount of soul searching it became apparent to Liene that she would need to leave her home country if Kurts was to get the best possible chance in life. Her final choices boiled down to Canada or the UK.

Liene is a qualified hairdresser and beautician and managed to secure herself a new job so they moved to Spalding in 2011 and following a tricky first year at a mainstream school, Kurts has now been a pupil at The Garth School for the past 5 years.

Liene says, "He is so happy. He runs to the car when he knows he is going to school. The staff are amazing with him, so engaging. I know they care for him throughout the school day, but what fills me with joy is that they actually teach him too. Kurts is nonverbal but he has now learnt to understand fluent English and Makaton: this means he can now communicate which was a huge part of his frustration prior to starting at Garth."



A Transformation

Liene has seen Kurts transform during his time at The Garth School, from a boy who could only express himself with high pitched squealing, to a boy who has grown in confidence and is now able to communicate through visual means.

Kelly Slater, Kurts' teacher, says, "When Kurts first came to Garth he was frightened and frustrated and we could see it was because he was struggling to communicate. He would scream and become so distressed that he would soil himself. We began using some simple visuals to begin with, and then moved onto Makaton with him. If Kurts needs something, he will now present the visual card that represents what he would like to say (ie toilet, drink, book). Kurts is now much calmer in nature because he is less frustrated, and no longer suffers from any toileting accidents."

Something Extra Special

Liene added, "I cannot thank The Garth school staff enough for what they have done for me and my son. They treated Kurts like an individual as soon as he arrived. I have completed a 6 week Makaton course myself and I can now communicate with my son; it's like we have been given a key to unlock Kurts."

"He has also made real friends at school, this is something he never had before. Recently, he had a friend over for tea for the first time and I heard them running around, laughing in the garden, just like proper kids, I never thought I would see that for Kurts. The Garth School is the best thing that has ever happened to my son."

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Spalding Special Schools Fellowship -

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