Dear Mrs. Draper,

I loved your book Out of My Mind. Melody has truly inspired me. I never realized that disabled people have feelings too, I thought they were too dumb to realize all the stares and glares. Before I read your book, I read many other books about disabled people. They didn’t make me feel anything, learn anything or think about disabilities.

My grandfather for awhile was what I guess we consider normal. Then he got sick, very sick. He was just like Melody. He couldn’t talk, eat or move. While I was little, he was still able to move, talk and eat, he was sick but not terribly sick yet. Then a few years later he was in a wheelchair. The next thing I knew we had an aide walking around the house. Then the last I knew he had died.

Two years later after reading your book I looked at world differently. I am a big ski racer. At one mountain there are lots of disabled kids that ski with a guide. The National Ability Center makes this happen for all the children. My team and I were skiing when we saw a kid that looked like he had Down Syndrome. My friends all stared at him. I had learned from reading your book that even though he looks different that I should treat him the same way I treat everyone else. There wasn’t really time to do anything so I just smiled, waved and said “hi.” I wish I had more time to say something or do something.

I can’t believe that someone could have lived 11 years but hasn’t spoken one word. I thought you made up your story at first, then I realized this is actually happening to people. I used to see a disabled people and get all scared, nervous, stare at them and whisper to my mom or dad. Now I don’t.

Last year before I read your book during community service day my grade went to a nearby school called The Carmen Pingree School. This school works autistic children. My friends and I were all scared that they would bite us or do something really weird. When I got there some kids were more autistic then others. I was paired up with a little girl who was 8 years