

"Mom! I'm Going to Call My Friend Now, OK?"

A small child making such an announcement may not seem newsworthy, but for Jody it was headline material.

"I've had this beautiful, silly daughter who was only known to me for the past seven years," she says. "But then we went to Marne Street, and my Zoe made a friend. A friend!"



"My Zoe made a friend. A friend!"

As she tells us this story, she knows it is your kindness and support that make her cry tears of gratitude.

"It is hard to find the words," Jody says, through watery but happy eyes. "Zoe actually has a friend that she calls and who calls her and they share and they laugh and they're silly. I never thought that would happen."

With an audible sigh of relief, she adds, "It's what we've been

wanting for years, and after four months at Marne Street, it happened!"

Your support of Marne Street Clinic – opened last November and dedicated to helping children and families facing autism and intellectual/developmental disabilities – made this possible.

Zoe and her friend, Jackson, met in the social skills group. Like Jody mentioned, it didn't

happen right away. Zoe had severe separation anxiety, and it took several sessions before Jody could actually leave Zoe in group alone. When Jody was able to leave, not only did Zoe connect with Jackson and the rest of the group, but Jody and Jackson's mom, Eleanor, became friends, too!

"It was really organic," says Eleanor, "but we just got to talking. We didn't even know our

kids were becoming friends."

Adds Jody, "Autism is scary and it's lonely. Marne Street hasn't just given my daughter a friend. It has given me someone I can lean on."

From a clinical perspective, the group leader has seen a huge change in Zoe.

"Art therapy is a good example of how far Zoe has come. She used to be shy and scared and copy someone else's drawing, but when Jackson encouraged her to draw and share, over time she did!"

Together in the wait area before and after group sessions, this group of four creates a wonderful and infectious energy!!

We're not sure what's more wonderful – the connection they formed at Marne Street Clinic or your kindness and compassion.

We are so glad, though, that we don't have to choose. **THANK YOU!**