

# A bridge to a brighter future

By Keith and Joni Geary

When your child is diagnosed with autism, no one tells you what to do next. Sadly, the medical community offers no protocol for treatment.

Here in Oklahoma, after legislation mandating health care insurance coverage for autism (Nick's Law) failed in the state House, we realized how important it is to speak out about a disease that is much too often ignored.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in every 150 children is diagnosed with autism. Known as the fastest-growing disease in the country, autism is often described as a silent epidemic because as the number of children suffering from this disease increases, public awareness remains low.

Realizing your child has autism can be devastating, as we experienced when our son Aaron was diagnosed just before his fourth birthday. Medicating him for life wasn't an option for us. So, we started researching more information about autism and we connected with communities that offered us resources and support.

As we researched different treatment options for our son, we were forced to look out of state. That led us to Dr. Bryan Jepson, a former emergency room physician and now medical director of Thoughtful House Center for Children in Austin, Texas. Jepson, whose own son is recovering from an autism diagnosis, administers biomedical treatments, which treat autism as a metabolic disease affecting the gastrointestinal, immune, toxicological and neurological systems.

Biomedical treatment addresses bowel abnormalities, toxins in the body, immunological disorders and other medical conditions

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Shortly after Aaron began biomedical treatments at Thoughtful House, we began to notice results. His body was healthier, allowing him to become more mentally focused, which greatly improved the effectiveness of other therapies. He is by no means cured, but his condition has improved.

In August, we founded Aaron's Bridge, a nonprofit organization to address children's health issues in Oklahoma. Our first priority is to establish a biomedical treatment and research facility in Oklahoma.

We want other parents with autistic children to know that they are not alone and their situation is not hopeless. We continue to seek partnerships with Oklahoma's outstanding and well-respected medical and research community. We have an opportunity — rather, an obligation — to give our children a brighter future.

Keith and Joni Geary own Capital West Securities in Oklahoma City and are founders of Aaron's Bridge ([www.aaronsbridge.org](http://www.aaronsbridge.org))

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