

Gabrielle Tazzia has been involved in the medical system for most of her adult life; first as a medical professional and then most importantly, as a mother. She was the primary care provider for her son Wesley Schaefer for his almost 18 years of life. Wesley had cerebral palsy and a host of related complications. He was non-verbal, non-ambulatory and tube fed. In spite of his frequent hospitalizations, multiple diagnoses, medications and surgeries Wesley was a happy, social young man. Her family did not learn about Palliative Care until late in Wesley's life. She feels that some decisions that she and her husband made would have been different had they had the kind of guidance that the Palliative Care team at Mott Children's Hospital at the University of Michigan had to offer. The team was there for her at the end of Wesley's life and was able to help the family get Wesley home to die. For the past 13 years she has been involved the Patient Family Centered Care Department at the University of Michigan serving on committees and speaking for classes, Grand Rounds and the community. Since Wesley's death 9 years ago Gabrielle has been a proponent of Palliative care. For the past year she has served on the board of Children's Palliative Care Coalition of Michigan. Her hope is that someday palliative care will be more widely known and accepted especially in the pediatric world.