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ARCHIVES

OUR VIEW: Abington's disability educator

By The Patriot
Ledger

*Editor's note:
Readers often
comment that there
should be more
good news in the
paper. While it's
true that there's
more than enough
bad news to go
around, on
Thursdays on the
editorial page we
will highlight some
of the many good
news stories that appear on our pages on a regular basis.*



Colton McGrath

One reason children can be mean to classmates or playmates with disabilities is that they have no understanding of what the boy's or girl's condition is.

All they know is, someone's different.

What better way to gain an understanding of a physical or mental problem than asking questions of the youngster who has it? That's what 9-year-old Colton McGrath of Abington believes.

Colton, a third-grader at Woodsdale Elementary School, has cerebral palsy. He does well in his school subjects but has the same problems thousands of others with cerebral palsy have: recurrent seizures, trouble walking and running and difficulty speaking clearly.

For the most part Colton gets on well in school and at play but he has been taunted at times. He wants the youngsters who know him, and lots of others, too, to understand what his life is like. So with the help of his mother, Kerriane McGrath, and a classmate, Julia Coombs, Colton has produced a 15-minute video in question and answer format. This way, Colton can field the kind of questions his classmates probably have thought about but never asked. With Colton's answers, they will have more awareness of his disability and how it affects his life.

This could be the beginning of bigger things for Colton's project. Teachers were very impressed when they saw the video in December and so were Colton's classmates. There is talk of making more videos for the entire school system and Colton's mother can see her son as a spokesman for

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cerebral palsy as he grows older.

Colton McGrath can't do everything other kids can but he's learned to overcome deficits by accentuating all the things he does well. That's a lesson we can all learn.

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