

Introduction

My name is April Remfrey, and I have dedicated my career to inclusion as an educator, leader and consultant. Years ago, I worked in an LCE program where I had the privilege of teaching a student who left a lasting mark on me.

The Moment

This student had a gift for connecting with others. He was a natural relationship builder, able to draw in both peers and adults with his warmth, curiosity, and incredible life experiences. He loved to learn, but he also struggled with food sensitivities and emotional regulation, which often made daily life at school challenging.

Despite the difficult moments we shared, he and I built a strong bond. I knew I mattered to him, and he mattered deeply to me. A couple of years ago, long after our time together in the classroom, he reached out to me on LinkedIn. He told me he would be in town and wanted to meet. I was so touched that I rearranged everything to make sure I could see him.

When we met, I was struck by how much he had grown. He was no longer the boy from my memories but a young man who had just finished his first year of university. He spoke with excitement about his future, telling me that he hoped to become a politician one day.

The Shift

That moment shifted something in me. I realized that even in the times when teaching felt hard, when progress was slow, or when emotions ran high, the connection we built mattered. It stayed with him, just as it stayed with me. Inclusion is not only about what happens in the classroom. It is about the lifelong relationships and the belief that every child has a future worth investing in.

The Takeaway

What I want you to remember is this: inclusion is powerful because it changes lives on both sides. Our students are not just learners in the moment, they are future leaders, community builders, and changemakers. Sometimes the most lasting impact of inclusion is simply showing up, again and again, with love and belief in a child's potential.