

# High School Quarterback Made an Amazing Promise to Girl With Down Syndrome, And He Kept It

MARIA VITALE GALLAGHER MAY 29, 2015 | 6:30PM WASHINGTON, DC

Ann Marie Lapkowicz is a friend of mine. Her daughter is now an international celebrity.

The story begins when Ann Marie's daughter Mary was in 4th grade. As PennLive.com reports, her friend Ben Moser worked hard to make sure that Mary was included in the games the other fourth graders would play.

His act of kindness was significant because

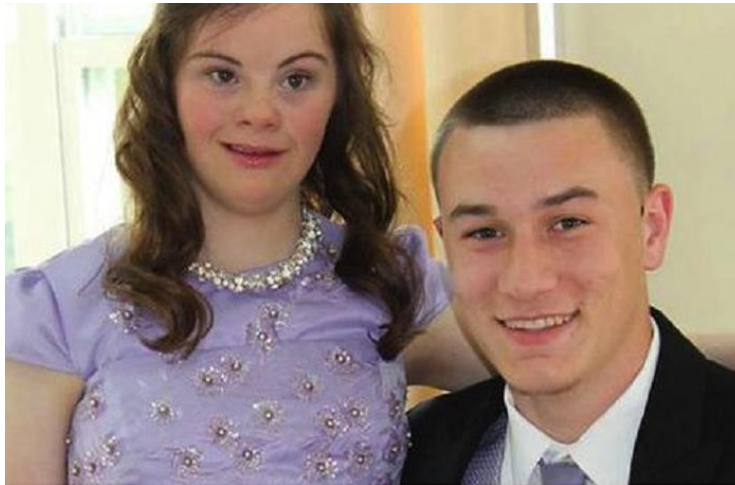
Mary has Down Syndrome. But to Ben, Mary was not a statistic—she was a friend.

Ben informed his mother that, when he was old enough, he would invite Mary to the high school prom.

But Ben and Mary ended up attending different high schools. As fate would have it, their paths crossed one day, and Ben decided to make good on his long-ago promise. As he told PennLive.com, "We got balloons and I wrote 'prom' on it. I presented her with the balloons and asked her to go to prom with me."

But the fairy tale did not end there. News of the quarterback who asked his Down Syndrome friend to the prom has gone viral. The pair even appeared on the cable program "Fox & Friends." Ben told the Fox News anchor, "Mary's the coolest person ever!"

He also said his mother has never been prouder of him.



Mary's mother, my friend Ann Marie, told me she was wondering if allowing PennLive to publicize the story was the right thing to do. After all, she is protective of her children, and is even reluctant to post pictures of them on Facebook.

But she had heard that such positive stories can save the lives of Down Syndrome children (It has been estimated that 90 percent of Down Syndrome babies are aborted.). If it could save one life, she figured the discomfort of the spotlight would be worth it.

I have watched Mary grow up into a beautiful young woman. I have known her to rise very early to attend church with her family on weekday mornings. She is a very special girl, and it is heartwarming that the world has come to recognize that through the "prom-promise" made by an equally special young man.

Ben and Mary's friendship should provide a lesson to us all.