

Father and son touched by compassionate act of New Bedford Police officer

"Earlier today I was walking down Acushnet Ave with my 8-year-old nonverbal autistic son. As we were crossing the entrance to the CVS parking lot, something triggered a meltdown and my son flopped to the ground. He's a very solid 100 lbs, and when he has a meltdown, he can be nearly impossible to get off of the ground against his will.

As I was trying to help my son calm down and get out of danger, a New Bedford Police Officer stopped and blocked the entryway to the parking lot with his cruiser.

At that point, Officer Gerry Harris came over and asked if my son was alright. When I explained the situation, he offered to assist in moving my son to my car which was parked in the lot. Together, we picked him up, and then something amazing happened. My son grabbed on to his uniform, and let him carry him in his arms to the car.

Officer Harris asked me his name and then spoke to him kindly and compassionately, saying "Hey, Jeffrey. Are you ok? We're just going over to dad's car."

His patience, kindness, and compassionate attitude made all the difference in my son's world today. I just want the City of New Bedford Police Department (Official), the people of New Bedford, and Officer Harris to know how grateful I am."-David Whynot.