

THE CITY Journal

WEST JORDAN'S OWN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

WEST JORDAN WOMAN'S BOOK TACKLES THE CHALLENGES OF RAISING A CHILD WITH DOWN SYNDROME

By Peri Kinder | peri.k@thecityjournals.com

Wendy Hooton's baby was just hours old when she learned he had Down syndrome. She was devastated. It was 1990 and Hooton didn't know what to expect for her child, Matthew. Within 24 hours, the young mother was asked if she wanted to give Matt up for adoption.

"I was like, wait a minute. I just had a baby and now you want to take him from me?" she said. "I was having a hard time with the diagnosis, but it didn't mean I wanted to give him away. So that was when I said it's me and him against the world."

Over the last three decades, Hooton has learned valuable lessons when it comes to raising a child, and now an adult, with Down syndrome. In October, she published her book, "Big People Don't Pee in the Park: A Mother and Son's Journey with Down Syndrome." She hopes her story will inspire other parents to create a wonderful, inclusive life for their children with the condition.

In her book, Hooton talks about the times she felt like giving up, the times she felt like celebrating and everything in between. She wants parents to know any emotion they're dealing with is valid, and that they are not alone.

"I had been journaling stories of situations that he'd put me in over the last 33 years. We've had some of the most hilarious and not-so-hilarious situations," Hooton said. "So I decided to put humor in my book. I use humor to help these parents who might be struggling, like I did, and give them hope. In fact, my tagline has been healing, hope and humor. I want to give them hope and to give them a glimpse into their future."

Hooton said Matt, who is now 33, has been her biggest challenge and her biggest blessing. She wishes people would focus on living

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Wendy Hooton and her son Matt show off her best-selling book "Big People Don't Pee in the Park: A Mother and Son's Journey with Down Syndrome." Hooton wants the book to help families who are raising children with the condition. (Photo courtesy of Wendy Hooton)

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