

To My New Schoolmates:

Hey, how is your summer going? I want to take a second and introduce myself. My name is Nathaniel Newman and I am moving to Reno from Short Hills, New Jersey. Im going to be a 5th grader at Westergard ES.

My parents and I think it would be a good idea if I tell you a little about myself before you meet me for the first time. We think that might make it easier for us all to become friends. Why you ask? Well, I'm different than most kids you may have met before.

I know, I know... All Kids are different. But, I think you will agree I am a little different than most. I was born with a rare genetic birth defect called Treacher-Collins Syndrome (TCS). TCS causes a crazy thing to happen when you are growing in your momma's belly. The bones and stuff in your face don't grow properly. Then, when you are born, you look very different than most kids. Not only do you look different, it's hard for you do things most kids do pretty easily. I had a hard time eating, breathing and hearing when I was a baby. The good news though, thanks to some wicked awesome doctors I can eat, hear and breathe pretty well. But, I still look different and I don't want you to be nervous when you meet me.

A few more details would help. I have had 54 surgeries in 10 years. You read that right. 54 surgeries. Many to reconstruct the bones in my face. NOT FUN AT ALL! Some to build new airways to breathe through. Some to build me a bone attached hearing aid. Too many to talk about. Surgery is NOT fun. But, the cool part is that I have been to some of the coolest cities in the world for my operations. NYC, Boston and Cincinnati just to name a few. Now, I still breathe with a tracheotomy which is a tube in your neck. Don't be grossed out. It doesn't bother me just try not to touch it. I also have a hearing aid in my skull. It's cool cause I hear everything but dad worries cause if it gets wet or damaged it is MUCHO expensive.

Now the fun part. Other than all the stuff I just wrote I AM TOTALLY NORMAL!!! I am seriously smart... I love PIZZA and Meatballs and Spaghetti. I have a brother Jacob he is 8. (Totally annoying!!!) My dogs Smokey and Coco are totally BOSS! And of course I love my Mom & Dad. I have cool friends all over the country. And my absolute favorite fun thing... WAIT FOR IT... WAIT FOR IT!! MINECRAFT! I love MINECRAFT. Other video games too but especially MINECRAFT. Maybe we can play sometime if you like it as well. I also draw seriously funny cartoons. SEE BELOW.

Last thing... Kids like me sometimes have a hard time at new schools. Because I look so different kids stare and say mean things sometimes. If you wouldn't mind, please don't do that. It makes me sad and I'd much rather have fun with you than be sad. THANKS. If you want, you can read this awesome book called WONDER. My friend RJ Pallacio wrote it. It's about a kid like me name Auggie when he goes to a new school. RJ calls me her real life Auggie. Check it out, I know you will like it.

If your Mom or Dad have any questions, tell them to shoot my dad an email at russelnewman@gmail.com.

Thanks. Always Choose to Be Kind

Nathaniel

