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EDITORIAL

Josep Maria Jarque, *in memoriam*

Josep Maria Jarque, en memoria

K.T. Trueta

General Director, CDSF



Forty years ago, people with intellectual disability were practically invisible. They didn't exist, because we didn't see them.

The efforts, the tenacity and the unstinting work of parents and professionals that defended the visibility and capability of these individuals led to us seeing them now, walking around town, being classmates, working in ordinary businesses and going sightseeing.

Josep Maria Jarque was one of those champions of the capabilities of these individuals and of their need for

inclusion. From the time he was young, he revealed his pioneering perspective strongly in favour of education for all children, believing in the innate capabilities of each human being. What is more, he was outraged by the situations of injustice that all of us who have been working for this cause lived through, and that we are still living. Because he handled education the same way an artist creates art: with rhythm, thoroughness, creativity and a wide range of colours, since – as he so rightly said – education must be in the service of the children and consequently has to be adapted and personalised according to each child.

Josep Maria did not limit himself to only a single cause. Versatile and inquiring, he was an educator, teacher, theoretician, poet, mediator, politician, a wonderful father to his family, and an excellent counsellor! Few indeed are the individuals who possess so many admirable qualities together, qualities that he made so generously available to those who needed him.

It was in 2000 that I received his enthusiastic call telling me that he had in his hands a book by a young Swiss philosopher with cerebral palsy that he was translating, and he proposed that we should present it, along with the Foundation. We welcomed Alexandre Jollien together every time we invited him to Barcelona.

This shared project allowed Josep Maria and I to get to know each other in a closer and more personal way. As an advisor for the Catalan Down Syndrome Foundation (CDSF), I have only words of gratitude for his support. In the face of the most difficult times, I have always known that I could rely on him, on his sound judgement and on his encouragement.

Josep Maria helped us all to see the capabilities of all people, beyond mere labels. He gave strength and hope to all of

E-mail address: katy@fcsd.org

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us who work in the field of education, because his wisdom, his character and his unconditional dedication sustained us, while simultaneously giving us confidence.

We miss him greatly. Children, parents, relatives and professionals: we have all lost a leader in this long journey. Thank you, Josep Maria, for leaving us your love of work carried out with passion, for defending the idea of one school for everyone, and for embodying a philosophy of work and life that we in the Foundation share 100%.

This legacy will continue to guide us and to shine a light on the path ahead of us!

As he always used to say to everyone: Carry on!!

Josep Maria Jarque (1935–2016), educator and teacher. He dedicated his life to preserving and disseminating the rights of individuals with intellectual disability and to actively promoting inclusive schools.

At the beginning of his career, he was a teacher and founded the first occupational centre for individuals with intellectual disability in Catalonia. From 1980 to 1987, he was the head of the Special Education Service of the Catalan Department of Education, where he also worked as an advisor between 1982 and 1999. He was part of the parliamentary commission that developed the project Law for Social Integration of Disabled Persons (*Ley de Integración Social de los Minusválidos, LISMI*, in Spanish). He participated as an expert consultant for the United Nations and for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

In 2000 he received the *Creu de Sant Jordi* (the Cross of St George) for his work in support of individuals with disabilities and, in 2001, the *Medalla de la Ciutat de Terrassa* (Medal of the City of Terrassa). From 1999 until his death, he was an advisor for the Catalan Down Syndrome Foundation.