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The week before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July is maddening for our son 8. Everyone around him is getting ready for this special day and there is constant talk about it. No one realizes that this is a time of stress and anxiety, for him, us as parents and his sister, 10. I love all things social, I love the 4<sup>th</sup> parties with the fireworks all the people and the fun of being together. What I don't like is the constant worry that my son will get irate and scream, run away or go after another child. The sensory overload is just TOO MUCH for him. When his bucket is full, it is full but we can't tell when the bucket is full. He goes from zero to sixty in an instant. When the bucket becomes full, the verbal outbursts start. These can include.. "I wish I were dead, I hope you die, I want to kill you all." This becomes one huge stress ball for all involved. Other kids become afraid of him, parents are afraid to have us over and the invites stop coming in. He can be great for a long time but when anything does not go the way he thinks it should, he has an outburst. It is hard emotionally because we all want to be social at this fun time of the year and enjoy the cookouts and fireworks, but it comes at a price of an elevated stress level. There always needs to be eyes on him when with peers and there is a chance of running if he gets frustrated. So even if we get an invitation, we never get to relax and enjoy the event. Always having to be alert and on. We are adults and have a better understanding of the situation than his sister that pays a price by having to leave or being embarrassed by her brother's behavior. I understand that others want to protect their child from the outburst but it doesn't mean that it doesn't make me sad. Especially with all the violence in the media and attributing it

back to autism. I know he is an eight year old little boy with autism and sensory issues and he is just trying to find his way in the world. Funding from Project iAm would allow us to bring someone trained in behaviors with us to social outings and provide support for him in the moment. He is involved in summer camp and social groups but he needs more individual attention and in a natural setting when the social rules are more a gray color than black and white. Will you support him and help us help our son?