Sample Letter from Collateral Source

June 5, 2004

Disability Determination Services
P.O. Box 5555
Bigcity, New State 44124

Re: Sam Smith
Born: 5/7/77

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the mother of Sam Smith, who is now 27 years old. For a very long time, Sam lived with me. Last year, I couldn't keep him here any more because he was up a lot at night, talking loudly when he was up, and kept saying very strange things to me, like he didn't think I was his mother. I had to ask him to leave because I work and I couldn't keep working when I wasn't getting sleep. I felt really bad about this and worry about him all the time, but I didn't know what else to do.

As a youngster, Sam was a quiet, obedient boy. He didn't give me any problems when he was little. In high school, he started staying more to himself and not doing so well at school. When we would talk about it, he didn't seem to know why. He got quieter and quieter and didn't seem to have any friends. But he was still nice at home, so I didn't worry too much. And he wasn't failing at school, so that was good.

Sam then barely finished high school. After that, he really didn't do anything. He would stay in his room all day and read or just stare at stuff. He started not taking care of himself very well and wouldn't wash without my asking him to. He couldn't tell me why and, when I asked, he would get really angry with me, so I stopped asking. Since my husband passed away a few years ago, it was just Sam and me at home, so I tried not to push him too much.

For a little bit of time, Sam did a few odd jobs, but he couldn't seem to be able to keep work. He would say that the people at work were out to get him or his bosses accused him of doing wrong things. At first I believed him but then I wondered if this could happen at so many different jobs. He gave up trying to get work and then just stayed in his room. Sometimes he would say that I was trying to feed him bad food and he would refuse to eat.

I didn't know what to do. We've never had problems like this before and I didn't realize that what Sam was doing were signs of a sickness. Finally, one day, he got so upset with me I was frightened and called the police. When they got here, he was angry with them, and they took him to the

hospital. He was there for a couple of weeks, and I was told he had schizophrenia. He came back home and was better for a while but then fell back to his old ways.

Right now, Sam doesn't do anything. He's stopped taking the medicine they gave him because he said he doesn't like it. He sometimes goes to the clinic and meets with people there but not as often as he should. He also says that he doesn't trust those people and they're just going to try to put him away again.

Since I had to ask him to leave, I don't know what he does during the day. But, when he was here, he would just stay in his room, eat a little bit, and talk really loudly. When he comes here to see me now, he is dirty and smelly. I let him take a shower and try to wash the clothes he has with him if he will let me. He stops by about once or twice a week. He said that he sometimes goes in a shelter but doesn't like the people there so he sleeps outside. He's not eating much and looks real thin to me. I wish I could let him stay here but I just can't. It breaks my heart to see my wonderful boy like this.

I don't think he talks with anyone and I know he doesn't have any friends. He said people talk about him and point at him wherever he goes. He won't take the bus because of the people and walks here, which makes him really tired. When he comes by, I try to get him to eat something. Sometimes he will, and sometimes he won't.

Sam has changed so much. He used to be so bright and clever. Now, he seems to get really confused when I ask him questions. He forgets to do things and can't seem to tell me much about his life and what he does. He always seems to be distracted and thinking about something else even when I am talking to him, and he says he's listening. I know that he hears voices and noises and that's a big problem. I think these voices say very scary things to him.

I hope that you can help my son. I try to give him some help, but my job doesn't pay too much, so I can't do a lot. If you know of some place he can get help, I'd sure appreciate it. Having some income would help him get a place, and that would help him a lot, too. Thank you for reading my letter. I hope this helps. You can call me at work 999-456-2345.

Sincerely,

Sara Smith