

Dear Friends,

Our son, Joshua, was born in March of 2004. Instead of holding our son, they rushed him away. Several hours later, doctors came in the room to explain that Joshua was born with a heart defect. He had been losing oxygen levels quickly, and was under the care of doctors in the NICU. That night they performed the first of many procedures – to open up a hole in his heart. Six days later, Joshua underwent open-heart surgery. The surgery was many hours longer than the doctors expected and complications occurred. When Joshua returned to his room in the PICU, they told us he might not live through the night.



Joshua did survive that night, but many complications extended his expected stay of two weeks. Fluid surrounded his lungs, massive blood clotting occurred, and fluid eventually surrounded his brain. He fought for his life on a respirator for at least four months. The doctors helped in this fight with eight surgeries, and too many procedures to count. Finally, after eight months, Joshua was released from the hospital.

Many more obstacles were to come for Joshua. He began screaming through the night, with oxygen desaturations and blood coming from his mouth. His crying continued through the day. We even had to change him in a bouncy seat, instead of lay him flat on the floor. Finally, after several years, we started him on a new diet and were able to perform home therapy.

It took Joshua quite some time to even roll over, let alone crawl. Soon Joshua was approaching his fourth year. We had heard about CIRT through a co-worker, and asked the physical therapist about the horse-riding program. She told us that horseback-riding mimics walking; therefore, we eagerly enrolled Joshua.

When Joshua first started coming to CIRT, he was not even walking. We would take him in the stroller down to the horses. Over time, and continual therapy at CIRT, he took his first steps. Soon he was walking between my husband and me in the living room for his therapy. Now he can walk the length of the living room between us. We always take his hand whenever we go short distances and walk with him.

Words cannot describe what a miracle it is to see our son walking. We feel that without the hard work of the therapists and CIRT, this would not even be possible. We are so blessed by all that CIRT has done for us.

Sincerely,

*Jeffrey & Barbara C Hill*

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