

LETTER FROM A HOPEKIDS FAMILY

Dear Friend of HopeKids,

I have been meaning to share with you what a difference you have made in our family since last spring, but life got in the way and I haven't had a moment. Please know that my delay in sharing does not diminish the appreciation we have for you.

Last summer, there was a HopeKids event at HopeRides Ranch. My five-year-old daughter, Victoria, loves, loves, loves horseback riding. We have been unable to afford the cost of therapeutic riding in the last year, so we jumped at the opportunity to have a day with her favorite activity in the entire universe. Little did I know that opportunity would be a complete game changer for my daughter's future.

While at the event, we met a teen with the same disorder that Victoria has. After the surprise that someone else had the same uncommon diagnosis settled, the young lady and her mom began to share some invaluable information they have learned in managing the issues the disorder brings.

They shared resources, personal experiences, and lots of stories of "I wish I had known ... when I/my daughter was Victoria's age." I was no less than overwhelmed and near tears.

I got home and immediately got to work. I contacted physical therapists who had been personally recommended and set up evaluations. Pretty intensive therapy began, and Victoria is leaps and bounds ahead of where she was when we started--specifically because of the knowledge and understanding the therapists had with my daughter's issues. If I had not gotten the recommendations I did, I likely would not have pursued therapy again--thinking there was nothing really that could be done to help her.

We have put her school team on alert regarding some other potential issues, and her individualized education program is set up to incorporate them as they may arise. We already jumped on some speech/articulation issues before they progressed because they were on our radar from meeting the other family. The early identification has allowed early intervention before things got much worse and were unfixable.

I also agreed to some interventions, like the use of a power wheelchair in school, that I had been resisting before meeting this other family. Allowing my daughter this seemingly overwhelming (and obnoxiously pink!!) assistive device has entirely reshaped her ability to benefit from academic experiences.

I don't say this lightly, and I am not prone to hyperbole in general: I can say with full confidence that HopeKids has changed my daughter's life in ways that I could have never imagined.

A few months ago, we went snow tubing on a flash "spots still available!" text alert. Victoria had a blast! Because of her increased strength and endurance--that have been accomplished due to that chance encounter with another HopeKid and her family--Victoria was able to stick it out and enjoy repeated trips down the hill without collapsing in exhaustion.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Anne Lawson



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR HOPE DAY PARTNERS

A Frostchild Production
Arizona Sunrays Gymnastics Center
Arizona Coyotes Hockey Club
Arizona Diamondbacks
Arizona Rattlers
AquaSafe Swim School
Ballet Arizona
Brittany Johnson
Bob Wesolowski Photography
Boeing
Bumble Bee Ranch
Butterfly Wonderland
Cindy Joiner Photography
Colten Cowell Foundation
Clydesdale Manhattan

Desert Mission United
Methodist Church
Disney on Ice
Fiesta Bowl Charities
General Mills
Hensley Beverage Company
Huss Brewing Company
Inspired Sugar
K2 Adventures Foundation
Kim and Bobby Melilo
KTAR News
LaMar Advertising
Larry Fitzgerald
Maricopa County Fair
Melissa McQueen

Mesa Community College
Mirabel
Microsoft Store Chandler
Miracle League
Musical Theatre of Anthem
Parties for Purpose
Pinnacle High School Softball Team
Phoenix Children's Hospital
Phoenix International Raceway
Phoenix Mercury
Phoenix Suns
Rainy Partners
Renaissance Hotel
Rhonda & Nenos-Build Events
Roadhouse Cinemas Tucson

Salerno's Restaurant
Scott Bates Photography
Scott and Lucy Gore
SeaLife Aquarium
Skin Addict
Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center
Spotlight Youth Theatre
Stand Up Live
Tempe Improv Comedy Theatre
The Studio Academy of Beauty
Transform with Vanessa Photography
The Encore Agency
Ultra-Star Multi-tainment Center
Valley Youth Theatre
Viviane Taveres





HOPEKIDS ARIZONA PHOTO ALBUM

Snapshots captured at April and May HopeDay Events

1. HopeKid Aaden, age 8, and HopeKid Jordan, age 5, at Pamela's Picnic.



2. HopeKid Brooklyn, age 5, and HopeKid Elizabeth, age 15, at HopeKids Annual Golf Classic.

3. HopeKid Campbell, age 11, and family at Phoenix Mercury game.



4. HopeKid Colton, age 4, learns the secrets to making Peach Pie with his family at Peach Pie Fundraiser.

5. HopeKid Devin, age 10, and a volunteer at Girl's VIP Day.



6. HopeKid Jordan, age 5, at Butterfly Wonderland.

7. HopeKid Robert, age 10, at Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center.

"Thank you so much for the Garden Fun Day with Kim. The boys had fun planting and snacking. Now the boys are trying to figure out how to make our garden bigger!"