



Letter from a Mothers Eyes:

When asked to write about my son Michael, I could easily write about his many diagnoses. It is easy to list him in medical and educational terms. Michael is a five year old boy with moderate cognitive impairment, hypo-tonic cerebral palsy, and is blind in his right eye. Many times, we have had to describe at countless doctor's appointments, educational meetings, and in medical forms, what he cannot do. At age five, he wears diapers, and cannot independently move about in his environment or feed himself. He cannot communicate to express his needs or dress himself. As his mother, I can also easily list his challenges that break my heart. I do not get to watch him go down the slide on the playground like his younger sister does. Nor do I get to watch him play cars with a friend or sing along with me and his sister to his favorite Barney song. I have watched my son struggle with every basic milestone from drinking his bottle, to sitting up without support and saying hi to mama and dada. We are still waiting for Michael to point to objects, crawl, and hold a crayon. There have been countless battles with trying to get Michael to eat certain textures, become less sensitive to certain noises, grind his teeth less, and bear weight in the proper positions. Michael has already experienced more surgeries, therapies, orthotics, evaluations, and tests in his five years than most people have in a lifetime.

Yet, the above description, does not describe what Michael can do, or more important, who Michael is. When I look at my blond haired, dimpled little boy, I also think of what an amazing person he is. Despite significant low muscle tone, developmental delays, and orthopedic impairments, Michael can now walk several feet. One neurologist told us he would never walk. With the help of many therapists, the same little boy who required a special bottle that squirted formula into his mouth will now eat a plate of his favorite foods mac and cheese and pudding with hand over hand assistance. It seems like yesterday. Michael couldn't not even express the basic communication greeting hello. Today, he clearly tell us his list of wants.....put fan on, put Barney on, more milk, more kiss, all done Marissa (his little sister) Each day we are seeing more and more of Michael's unique personality emerge. When I think of my beautiful son I try not to focus on his diagnoses because that does not describe the real essence of whom Michael is. Michael is a little boy who loves swings, Sponge Bob, dinosaurs, and watching the Steelers with dada. He loves to read books with his nana, go for wagon rides with his momma and sister, turn the wheel in his papa's red car and cuddle with Aunt Kay. He has inherited his love of the beach from his mother and his silly sense of humor from his father. Going to school, clapping, and listening to music (and okay, watching fans too) are some of his favorite pastimes. More important, Michael is my biggest teacher and inspiration. He has taught me amazing life lessons that few of us are fortunate to experience. Never have I met anyone that has the strength, trust, and happiness that my son is filled with. His smile beams sunshine warmth and love. Just ask anyone that has met him. I wish that instead of writing on his paperwork five year old with cerebral palsy and cognitive impairment, I could just write five year old hero filled with life and love.