

STAND, DANCE, AND SPLASH!

CAPRI ECKONEN'S STORY



Capri Eckonen is a happy nine year old girl who loves listening to music and being in the water. She was born with Cerebral Palsy and other medical conditions, but remains very healthy. This is due in large part to having proactive grandparents who take great care of her and provide her the equipment that she needs. "My wife, Diana of thirty-seven years and I are her caregivers. She is very happy and healthy, despite her challenges," Tom, her grandfather comments. Part of Capri's therapy includes standing in her EasyStand. Tom adds, "We knew standing was important, so we have kept Capri standing from the beginning. She used to have a homemade stander, then we decided to get the Magician because of the sit to stand feature."

Name: Capri Diana Eckonen

Age: Nine years old

Primary Diagnosis: Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation-Microcephaly & Cortical Visual Impairment

EasyStand Owned: EasyStand Mobile Magician Comfy

Standing in EasyStand Since: June 2007

Date of Onset: At birth 03-12-1998

Height & Weight: 4'3" & 65 lbs.



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A SPECIAL FAMILY

Capri’s dad and step mom live in North Carolina and she has two half brothers. Tom remembers, “We watched her while her dad (our son) finished his obligation to the navy. After two months with us she cried when they took her. My son then gave us custody which was the right move for everyone, especially Capri.” Capri has been living with her grandparents, Tom and Diana, in Pennsylvania ever since.

STANDING AT HOME & SCHOOL

Capri stands at home three evenings a week for forty-five minutes each time. She also uses a stander at school three times a week for thirty minutes each time. Tom, Capri’s grandfather, explains, “At school she spends part of her time in a regular classroom and the rest of her day in the special education room where the standing equipment is located.” School therapists create standing programs based on the child’s diagnosis and abilities, and then they communicate it to the other staff members.” Tom adds, “The therapist shows Capri’s teacher and aids what to do so they can help her during school.”

BENEFITS SEEN & UN-SEEN

“We really enjoy seeing her stand up and she seems to enjoy standing. Being severely mentally challenged it is hard to tell what effect it has on her psychologically,” Tom says. Usually with children like Capri, the physical benefits of standing are more obvious than the psychological benefits. “She needs to bear her own weight to strengthen her leg muscles. Using the EasyStand also helps her trunk control and head control,” Tom adds.

FUNDING THROUGH AN ORGANIZATION

Capri’s EasyStand stander was paid for by the Arc of Crawford County. The Arc advocates for the rights of citizens who are mentally challenged, enhancing their lives by promoting maximum independence and affording them opportunities for enrichment in their communities. “We chose to purchase the Magician because of the sit to stand feature and we love that it is easy to use. She can sit both before and after standing,” Tom admits.

CHALLENGE: GET YOUR CHILD STANDING AT SCHOOL.

SOLUTION: ENCOURAGE THE SCHOOL THERAPIST, TEACHER, AND AIDS TO WORK TOGETHER ON THE STANDING PROGRAM

CHALLENGE: UPGRADE FROM A HOMEMADE STANDER.

SOLUTION: FIND THE STANDER WITH THE BEST FIT, LOCATE FUNDING, POSSIBLY THROUGH AN ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION LIKE THE ARC.

