

Adam's journey to listening and spoken language began at birth with the results of a newborn hearing screening showing he was profoundly deaf. This diagnosis was a complete shock to us as everyone in our family is typically hearing. After several weeks of various tests, Adam was definitely diagnosed with Mondini Syndrome, a malformation of the cochlear nerves. Our questions were numerous and challenging. Would Adam ever hear? Would he speak? Would people understand his speech? Would we ever hear him laugh out loud? As part of a hearing family, what would communication look like between Adam and the rest of us? We knew that we, as a family, needed to do something to ensure that Adam would have the same opportunities in his life as any other child. Listening and spoken language was the clear choice for Adam and our family, so at the age of 13 months, Adam was implanted bilaterally with cochlear implants. He has been talking non-stop ever since!

Much like a typically hearing child, Adam's speech developed slowly. Unlike a typical hearing child, Adam required regular speech therapy sessions and specialized instruction in school to develop his speech. When Adam was four years old, our family moved to Phoenix. We immediately enrolled him in Desert Voices to continue with the specialized services that he needed to continue to develop his listening and spoken language. While he had developed wonderful speech skills prior, it was at Desert Voices that his speech exploded! Through the instruction and care of his classroom teacher, Discovery Room teacher, speech therapist, and teacher's aides, Adam learned how to put all of his language skills together to really start expressing himself. Desert Voices truly helped Adam find his voice.

While Adam was learning, our family was learning too. Special classes for parents, conferences at regular intervals, family gatherings and celebrations at the school, and opportunities to converse with other parents of deaf children helped all of us help Adam become his best self. We couldn't be more grateful for our experience at Desert Voices.

Today, Adam is in seventh grade, taking all honors classes, and earning straight As academically. He has built lasting friendships with classmates, flag football teammates, and Boy Scout troop members. His sights are set on a career as an engineer in the oil fields of Texas. Adam is certainly not limited by being deaf or using cochlear implants. As his family, we could not be more proud of the person he has become and all of his accomplishments so far in life.