

Lolo's Journey

2017 held a lot of emotions as our daughter, Lauren (we call her Lolo) graduated from the only school/family she knew, Desert Voices. Lolo started with bilateral hearing aides at birth, and then lost most of her hearing by age four. Lolo also didn't have just the challenge of hearing loss, she was also born Albino, which gave her poor vision, creating her to be visually impaired, but highly functional--still swinging on the monkey bars at DV, running and pushing the trikes with her friends, and being the diva she was born to be!

Desert Voices was our family's lifeline through guidance, knowledge, education, friendship, and support--they helped us in the decision to have our daughter get bilateral cochlear implants, which was the best decision we ever made! Within a few months, Lolo accelerated in her communication, soaking up all of the goodness DV had to give her to learn to listen and speak. Lauren left Desert Voices equipped to communicate, listen to the world around her, chat and giggle with friends, and most importantly a new found love to learn.

Lolo mainstreamed into her sibling's school which was a natural transition- it was our church home as well as comfort since her brother and sister were always. Lolo started her kindergarten year at CLS. Toward the end of her kinder year, we decided Lolo needed a smaller environment based on her dual sensory loss, so she moved to a new school which is now the 2nd home for our high energy, chatty, intuitive, and smart 8 year old. Lolo is in 2nd grade learning reading, writing, participating in music, art and so much more. She can raise her hand, and engage in questions, share about her day and hear others speak as well.

Many say when they meet Lolo, they can't even tell that she is deaf and has cochlear implants--"her speech and vocabulary is amazing!" they say. I always grin when I hear that, remembering the hundreds of hours she committed to the DV program, listening, being present everyday, and putting oral language as a priority in her life. I know in my soul, if it wasn't for the teacher's and staff's unique knowledge and persistence in teaching listening and spoken language to my sweet Lolo, she wouldn't have had the opportunity to be a part of her competitive dance team at Bricks Studio, have dear friends and sleepovers, laugh at my jokes on my long car drives, listen to the birds, and appreciate the sounds of nature...and MOST of all, using her ears/speech as her main source of communication. Nothing stops this beam of light and Desert Voices had their hand in that every day!

Lindsey and Adam Madison

