

THE CENTER FOR AUTISM & NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS

Patient Testimonial, July 2018

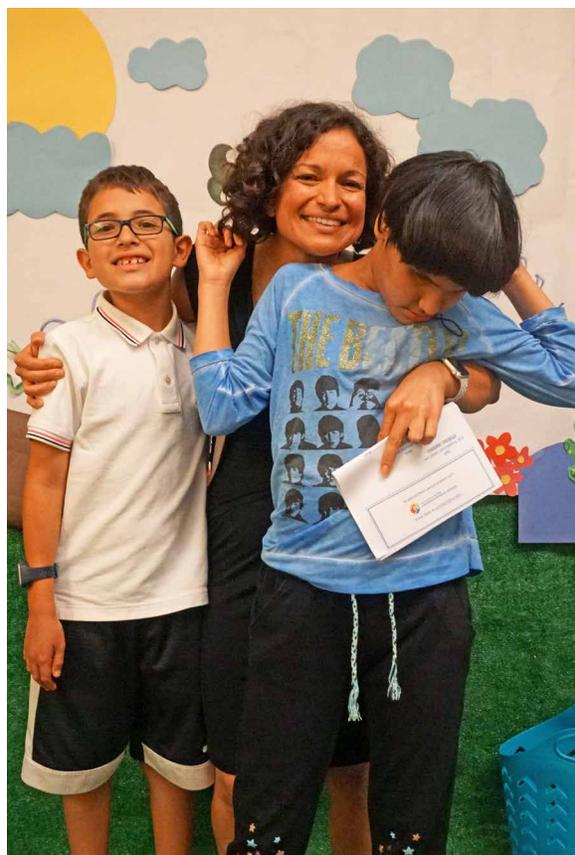
Born at just 24 weeks, Zoe endured severe damage to all four quadrants of her brain. Today, Zoe is 12 years old and while she is blind, mute and severely delayed, these limitations haven't stopped her from enjoying one of her favorite activities: music. "Music" was the first word she ever learned to sign at age four. She didn't even begin signing the word "food" until last year. Zoe's mother, Margaret, says, "In a sense, music was her food. It was the only thing she needed and is really the only thing she likes, besides swimming."

Zoe's favorite artists span all genres, from hip-hop to heavy metal, and include Michael Jackson, Audioslave, Guns & Roses and of course, classic Christmas carols. She can often be seen carrying around her portable hand-held radio, listening intently to each song that plays. Margaret says that Zoe has "perfect pitch." She can listen to any song and replay the exact key and chord on the piano with one hand.

A few years ago, Margaret heard through a friend about The Center for Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders' partnership with the Pacific Symphony's Heartstrings program for, "A Night with Pacific Symphony." She knew immediately that this would be a great opportunity for Zoe to hear live music.

These events are a unique opportunity for families to experience and enjoy a live musical performance featuring a quintet composed of Pacific Symphony musicians. It takes place in a safe, comfortable and intimate setting designed just for families affected by autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders.

Zoe has attended these events at The Center for Autism the last several years. Margaret says, "We tell her we are going to hear music and when we get in there, she knows exactly where we are."



This specialized environment gave Margaret and Zoe the positive experience they needed to feel confident attending Zoe's first live musical performance, Cirque for Kids! at Segerstrom Center for the Arts, last month.

Margaret says of the performance, "Zoe listened and was engaged during the entire performance. I believe the Pacific Symphony event is what helped prepare us and Zoe for such a wonderful and special afternoon, and for our first family outing ever."

