

## **Our Story**

Christian entered kindergarten with no preschool experience. We were willing to accept the possibility that Christian may be slightly behind academically due to our decision to have him stay with Grandma Betty instead of attend preschool. We felt confident that he had the intellectual basis to catch up with the children who participated in preschool prior to starting kindergarten. Throughout Christian's kindergarten year he continued to struggle with reading. His test scores in reading and comprehension were below most of the children in his class. We met with his teacher a few times through the year. He was provided one on one instruction several times a week. Little improvement was made. We ended kindergarten with continued concerns but were hopeful that he would catch up to his peers in first grade.

During our first parent teacher conference we became aware of Christian's continued inability to read. He began to slip further behind his peers. Most of his test scores indicated functioning in the kindergarten range. We discussed having Christian tested by the Special Education Cooperative for possible learning disability or functioning issue. Prior to the testing we wanted to have Christian's vision and hearing tested to ensure that his difficulties weren't related to something else. Christian passed his hearing test so we moved on to a complete vision screening. Dr. Petty completed a vision screening on Christian. Christian has 20/20 vision however; Dr. Petty noticed an issue with Christian's eye tracking ability. Dr. Petty referred Christian to the Vision Development Center for an assessment. Christian told the ladies at the Vision Center that he couldn't read like the other kids. He was starting to notice that he struggled more than most of the kids in his class. Sure enough, Christian was diagnosed with Convergence Insufficiency and Abnormal Oculomotor Function. No amount of traditional reading recovery would have worked for Christian. His reading ability would not have improved with repetitive reading techniques. He required a special kind of treatment.

Christian began a 32 session vision therapy regiment shortly after diagnosis. Christian attended vision therapy twice a week. Within a month of starting vision therapy with Mrs. Rebecca, we noticed improvement with Christian's ability to complete homework, improved handwriting and improved grades on school papers. Toward the end of his therapy regiment, Christian's teacher noticed significant improvements. The majority of Christian's test scores were above average. He ended first grade with no academic concerns.

There are many people to thank for Christian's success. Christian's optometrist was the first to notice a problem. We are very thankful for his awareness of this particular vision disorder. The Orleans Elementary School has been so

supportive. Christian missed two half days a week of school for 32 weeks. His classwork was adjusted to accommodate his therapy schedule. Mrs. McCracken was also very supportive of Christian and encouraged him throughout the entire process. Christian's vision therapist, Mrs. Rebecca was always loving and kind toward Christian. They created a very special bond between each other. Mrs. Stephanie always greeted Christian with a smile. She worked very hard to keep us up to date on Christian's appointments. Dr. Joan took the time to get to know Christian and our family. She was always available to address any questions or concerns. We view the team at the Vision Developmental Center as family. We aren't sure what kind of future Christian would have without proper diagnosis and care. We are forever grateful.

**Brandy and Chris Terrell**