



THE Beacon

They're Off and Away!!!

Three students who joined the Little Light House in February 2007 have met a significant number of their individual goals and objectives and are graduating on July 16. Julianna, Nicholas, and Emily will walk, run, or cruise down the aisle into the open arms of parents and friends who just three years before were uncertain of their children's futures.

As for any parent, learning their children had developmental delays was not easy to hear. Here are these parent's stories in their own words.



Nicholas Weldon

Nicholas: The Social Chairman by Patrick Weldon

Nicholas entered our lives in January 2006.

We knew from ultrasounds that the caboose on our little train of two girls and two boys would be a boy. Christy and I had foregone all prenatal testing and her pregnancy had been unremarkable.

The birth was also smooth and I assisted with his delivery. Joy turned to panic as I looked into his face only to see the telltale evidence of



Emily Maclain

Down syndrome. I paced the halls nervously until my suspicions were confirmed, then I broke the news to Christy and our other kids. Our first few days were a painful roller coaster of emotions as we absorbed the shock.

I learned about the Little Light House early on. When he was just four days old he officially became the youngest child ever placed on the waiting list.

We have now been part of LLH for three years. There, Nicholas took his first steps



Julianna Salter

and said his first words. He has grown into a bright-eyed little cherub who greets each day with a smile and every person with a hug. As the Social Chairman of the school, we laugh when he gets pulled out of class to greet visitors.

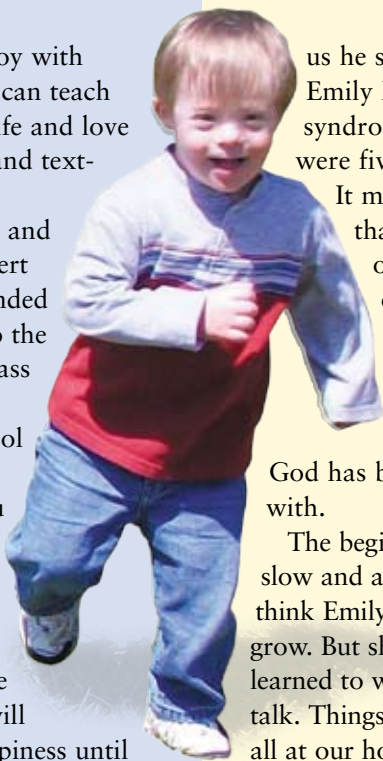
We now face the inevitable truth that he has come so far he will graduate this summer and start kindergarten. Over these three years our family has learned that true joy can be found in the innocence of a child, and

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that a little boy with special needs can teach more about life and love than a thousand textbooks.

My mentor and hero, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, ended his address to the graduating class of Harvard Medical School with this: "Some of you will achieve great things and accomplish great acts, but none among you will ever find happiness until you learn to serve others." Nicholas will be leaving LLH this summer, but everyone who has served to help shape him will continue to be a part of our lives.



us he suspected Emily had Down syndrome as if it were five minutes ago.

It makes me laugh that we thought our life was over. Our life had just begun with this beautiful child that God has blessed us with.

The beginning was slow and at times I didn't think Emily would ever grow. But she did. She also learned to walk, run and talk. Things aren't slow at all at our house these days and I love every minute of it. Emily is constantly on the go. She has lots of things to do and so many

Emily: Full of Life by Marquitta Maclain

The doctor said, "We suspect your baby has Down syndrome," and we thought the world had come to an end. Up until that moment we thought our world was perfect. I was 27 years old and healthy. We were heartbroken. I had just given birth to a beautiful baby girl one day earlier and they said she was perfect. We just knew they had made a mistake. The test would prove it. When they told us that Emily had a heart defect I was angry, confused and exhausted. I didn't think I could go on.

Emily Jewel Maclain was born August 14, 2005, beautiful and perfect. I remember the moment the doctor told

stories to tell. Every day I thank God for blessing me to be Emily's mommy. When I look at Emily I don't see a child with Down syndrome. I just see Emily, my beautiful sweet princess that brightens my day like no other can.

Emily has really grown since starting the Little Light House. They have been such a huge blessing. I'm sure she



will continue to develop and improve from the love and encouragement she has received from her teachers, therapists, and volunteers. After she graduates, she will be attending a preschool for typically developing kids. I can only pray that LLH will continue to bless the lives of kids like Emily for many more years to come.

Julianna: Testament of Faith by Keith and Suzanne Salter

During our sonogram, we were tickled pink to learn we were having a girl. After a normal pregnancy, Julianna was born on May 23, 2005. Since we are both profoundly deaf we were concerned about her hearing, but it was perfectly normal.

At her two-week check up, the doctor noticed her head had not grown and recommended following up.

After two months of no change, Julianna had an MRI and CT scan of her brain. We received the devastating news that she was born with intracranial calcifications and microcephaly, meaning she has thousands of calcium deposits in her brain.

Julianna's pediatric neurologist was not optimistic. She explained the greater risk for mental retardation, seizures, and severe physical impairments. Our despair was so extreme believing our child might have little hope for a promising future. It also hurt having a special needs child, after being profoundly deaf ourselves. We questioned, "Why us?"

After much prayer, we remembered that God would care for our princess. Our former pastor prayed with us and anointed Julianna with oil as it states in the book of James in the Bible. We began to feel God entrusted us to care for this special child after equipping us as parents that have overcome adversity.

Julianna started at the Little Light House in February 2007. With the



help of her loving teachers, therapists, and volunteers, Julianna has learned her alphabet, numbers and colors. She speaks in sentences and is even spelling and reading short words. She is also walking with a walker. Upon graduation she will enroll at Magnolia Speech School. We feel there is a great hope that she will soon be prepared to mainstream in a regular school setting.

Julianna's progress has exceeded her neurologist's expectations and it is gratifying to see her achieve one milestone after another. We believe Julianna will be a testament to our faith that God works in mysterious ways

Oh, The Places You'll Go!

by Maureen Harbinson, Executive Director



Maureen Harbinson,
Executive Director

My column in this issue of the Beacon—inspired by the books of Dr. Seuss—will focus on our three children who are graduating in July, and also give three examples of our kids who have taken great strides in the last few weeks.

Our Graduates

Congratulations! Today is your day. You're off to Great Places! As Dr. Seuss writes, *You're off and away!*

Nicholas first visited us in his father's arms when he was just two weeks old. He became a student at the Little Light House when he was one year old. Since then, Nicholas has learned to talk, use sign language, and develop so rapidly in cognitive areas. As for his gross motor skills, he started walking hesitantly, but it wasn't long before he could "run" rings round any of us. Again borrowing from a book of Dr. Seuss, Nicholas is *Thing ONE*.

Emily is *Thing TWO*. She is so full of life, and life needs to be lived at top speed.

Emily came to us when she was 18 months old and has learned so many skills. She loves to sing and shake her "bootie." She always retells the daily story in her own words, knows all her pre-school skills, and is developing a wonderful, nurturing personality.

Not only does she have to see that her classmates are welcomed with hugs and kisses, but also some of the other students as well: every day!

Julianna loves to be noticed and applauded for working hard and achieving her goals. Whenever I visit the classroom she calls out "watch me." She has improved on her sentence structure and she is using her left hand on a regular basis. She runs in her walker and you have to get out of the way unless you want to be run down. She has achieved most, if not all, of the goals set for her.

Matthew 17: 20 says, "If you had faith the size of a

mustard seed you would tell this mountain move and it would move. There is nothing you wouldn't be able to tackle."

Nicholas, Emily and Julianna, today is your day. Your mountain is waiting. So... get on the way!

AND THE THINGS YOU DO!

I have been moved to tears many times recently when I have been called to a class to watch our children do things that in the past would have seemed impossible.

Ella Grace was on the computer watching a program with colors bursting like bubbles on the screen. Ella purposefully hit the space bar every time the cause and effect command was given! We all rejoiced and called her mother and told her we had we had a surprise for her. When she came and saw her daughter accomplish one of her biggest goals, she simply said, "Oh Ella!" as she cried and hugged her daughter.

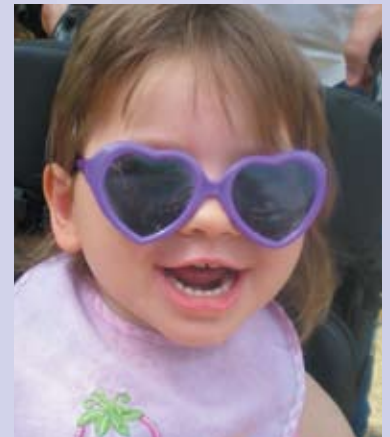
Ben has gone from a seed that was sprouting to a young sapling, seemingly in the last few weeks. His self-help skills are remarkable; from signing more to make

his wishes known, drinking from a straw himself, and then taking his bib off when finished. This is amazing and we are overwhelmed at his



Benjamin Smith

progress. Way to go, Ben! Breanna is a delight. She loves to communicate with her peers, therapists, and teachers using eye gaze and her wonderful infectious voice—especially when she laughs a deep throaty sound. She is also beginning to use assistive technology devices to work cause and effect programs on the computer. We



Breanna Moss

Oh the places you will go, and the things you will do!

Rankin Kids Supply Miracles for LLH Students

Numerous fundraisers supply technology, therapy that make a huge difference

Students at three Rankin County schools put on their creative thinking caps and organized fundraisers that earned around \$4,000 for the Little Light House this school year. Funding was used to support the assistive technology program.

At Northwest Middle School, students combined their writing and math skills to create letters requesting donations to benefit the Little Light House. According to teacher Brandi Smith, this format has been the most profitable of all the fundraisers they have undertaken.

Lady Baker's Humanities students at Brandon High had another bright idea. During the first semester final exam week, they provided movies and snacks for students exempt from testing. Northshore Elementary Venture students also took on a new project. Each student handcrafted jewelry, which they sold to parents, students, teachers, and friends. All proceeds benefited LLH students.

"We have several students for whom communication is a challenge," shares Maureen Harbinson, LLH Executive Director. "We are working with them to respond to computer stimuli. These types of fundraisers supply the much needed assistive technology and therapy that will eventually prepare them for a whole new world of communication options."



Students from Northwest Rankin Middle School present a big check.



Brandon High students visit LLH after their successful fundraiser.



Joshua Ball (above) "steers" golf cart at the Tees for Tots Golf Tournament.

Laurie Smith (pictured with Ashton Wiseman at right) visits the Little Light House before speaking at the 2009 Tea Party. This year's event raised over \$15,000 and the 2009 Tees for Tots Golf tournament raised over



Tapestry of Love Annual Campaign

Thank you for your support of the Little Light House and our work changing and improving the lives of children with special needs. Over the past school year, you have been a part of the lives of our twenty students as they have overcome challenges and obstacles.

You have helped provide special education and specialized therapy.

You have supported families through parent programs and family field trips.

You have given hugs, held hands, and dried tears

“I want you woven into a tapestry of love, in touch with everything there is to know of God. Then you will have minds confident and at rest, focused on Christ, God’s great mystery.”

COLOSSIANS 2:2-4, THE MESSAGE

through the lives of our teachers, therapists, and volunteers.

Without your generosity, our tuition-free program would not exist.

This new school year we will provide 14,400 hours of

special education.

Our therapists will provide 2,160 hours of speech, physical, and occupational therapy.

We will take at least three field trips (the zoo, the state fair, and horseback riding- oh my!).

Our students will spend at least 450 hours learning assistive computer technology.

They will learn to sit up, to speak, to walk, and to run. They will continue on the path to becoming all they can be.

Every gift you give, every hour you share, every prayer you lift on our behalf weaves you tighter into our Tapestry of Love. Our goal is to raise \$75,000 through this portion of the campaign by the end of September. Every gift will bring us one step closer to

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor-up to \$99 | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend- \$100 to \$499 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter- \$500-\$2,499 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainer- \$2,500 to \$4,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor- \$5,000 to \$9,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> Lamplighter- \$10,000-\$19,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beacon- \$20,000-\$39,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Keeper of the Light- \$40,000 and up | |

Name _____ Phone _____

Company Name (if applicable) _____

Annual Campaign Gift Amount

\$ _____

I would like to become a monthly contributor. Please send me a monthly contribution form.

I cannot give today, but please contact me again in _____ (month)

Credit Card Donation (Visa/MC only)

One Time Only

\$ _____

Type of Card _____ Credit Card Number: _____ Exp. Date _____

Name on Card _____ Security Code _____

Billing Address (if different) _____

Signature _____

Honorariums, Memorials, and Gifts

The Little Light House is proud to offer acknowledgements of honorariums, memorials, and special gifts. When addresses are available, an acknowledgement card is sent to the recipient of your choice, informing them of your gift to us.

This donation is:

In Honor of: _____ In Memory of: _____

Is a gift for: _____ for the occasion of: _____
(birthday, anniversary, Christmas, new birth, wedding, graduation, etc.)

Send an acknowledgement to: _____

Thank You!

Thank you for your kind and appreciated contribution. Please mail to:
The Little Light House, P.O. Box 4392, Brandon, MS 39047
Please direct your questions to 601-829-3446.

Facts at a Glance

Your Gifts

- Allow every child to attend tuition-free and without any government funding.
- Directly impact our students through special education, one-on-one instruction, and specialized therapy.
- Provide a unique Christian curriculum designed specifically to meet the needs of children with developmental delays.

Our Needs

- Average cost per child per day: \$100
- Average cost per child per month: \$2,000
- Average cost per hour of therapy: \$50

Monthly Giving

- Monthly giving is currently \$2,000 per month.
- Our monthly giving goal is \$5,000 per month.
- Typical monthly giving amounts range from \$20/month to \$150/month.
- Becoming a monthly contributor is one of the easiest ways to support LLH.

KidzCrew Volunteering

- We have 24 Kidz Crew classroom helper shifts available each week.
- Volunteers choose how often and what days they work.
- Volunteers provide the individual interaction that is one of the most important components of our program.
- Volunteering makes you feel great!



Therapist Angela Johnson works with Joshua Ball.

The Little Light House Central Mississippi is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit Christian Developmental Center for children with special needs, age birth through six years of age. The Little Light House Central Mississippi does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, color, national or ethnic origin, or medical diagnosis (unless it affects the child's ability to attend on a regular basis) in the administration of its educational policies, and other school administered programs. Some behavioral conditions may be evaluated on an individual basis. The Little Light House Central Mississippi assures that all children's records will be maintained as confidential. All gifts to The Little Light House Central Mississippi are tax-deductible, less goods and services received

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