

## Who's New

It's hard to believe that 4 months have gone by, we hope all are well and getting ready for an enjoyable summer! We are very excited about our new "Hart Walkers" and want to extend our appreciation to all the parents who had to jump through hoops with insurance companies or to get independent funding. We felt your frustrations and impatience, but it was well worth it, all your children are doing well and will benefit from the time and energy you give for them.

So congratulations to: Alex Capobianco, Brianna Lennon, Jessica Meunier, Jesse Lee Quoi, Will Smitt and Joey Toce!

If we have missed anyone, please let me us know and PLEASE send some photo's!



Joey Toce

“ Look Mom & Dad...No Hands!”



## Joey Toce and Mom-Katrina

Joey received his walker very close to his 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday! Joey loves being in his walker, Katrina says he cries when you take him out. Joey also just started pre-school and can really interact with his classmates whether it be playing catch or standing at the play table with his friends.

In December 2005, Katrina started a support group for Moms with children of all different kinds of special needs. They meet about once a month, if anyone is interested, e-mail Katrina at [djtkmt@cox.net](mailto:djtkmt@cox.net) or call me for more info.

## Moving Poem for Special Children

This article was recently in Dear Abby. John and I are dedicating it to all of you, your children, to our own very special niece, Jessie who passed away 2 years ago at the age of 5 years young and of course her amazing parents, Charlie (John's brother) & Baylie, her twin sister Rachel and her new brother, Jack. Jessie, you were a gift.

(This poem was written by someone from a certain faith. Many who read this may be of another faith but I imagine it reaches all hearts just the same.)



Dear Abbey: Years ago you printed a poem that said God sends children with special needs to special parents because he knows that they will be cared for. (These were children with various disabilities.) I wish you would print that poem once again. I am sure it would help many parents who have a disabled child.-FAITHFUL ILLINOIS READER

DEAR FAITHFUL READER: The poem is very moving, and I'm pleased to reprint it. It was written 50 years ago by Edna Massimilla of Hatboro, Pa., the widow of a pastor, when their daughter, a child with Down syndrome, was born. (She is now with the Lord.) When I spoke with Edna who is 90- she explained that she wrote the poem to emphasize that every creation is for a purpose, and she's still writing poems and songs especially for children with disabilities. Read on:

### HEAVEN'S VERY SPECIAL CHILD

A meeting was held quite far from Earth  
It was time again for another birth.  
Said the Angels to the Lord above-  
"This special child will need much love.  
"Her progress may be very slow.  
"Accomplishment she may not show.  
"And she'll require extra care  
"From the folks she meets down there.  
"She may not run or laugh or play  
"Her thoughts may seem quite far away  
"So many times she will be labeled  
"different,' 'helpless' and disabled.  
"So let's be careful where she's sent.  
"We want her life to be content.  
"Please, Lord, find the parents who  
"Will do a special job for you.  
"They will not realize right away  
"The leading role they are asked to play.  
"But with this child sent from above  
"Comes stronger faith, and richer love.  
"And soon they'll know the privilege  
given  
"In caring for their gift from heaven.  
"Their precious charge, so meek and  
mild  
"Is heaven's very special child."

## Jacky Mercede Steppin' Out!



Jacky received her Hart Walker on December 2006 and as you can see by the photo, she is enjoying it very much. Her Mom, Lori said, when Jacky is in the walker, she only sees her daughter, not some bulky piece of equipment. Lori also loves to see Jacky play, interact with her twin sister Nicola and able to hold hands while walking with each other.



Above is photo of the Mercede Family: Dad-Frank, Jaclyn, Mom-Lori and Nicola. The Mercede Family was responsible for the creation of Twin Meadows Playground, a Boundless Playground at Stillwater Elementary School in Stamford Ct. Read on about their inspiring and dedicated story and check out their website [www.twinmeadowsplayground.com](http://www.twinmeadowsplayground.com).



It started in June of 1999 when Lori showed Franks father, (Jaclyn & Nicola's grandfather) an article about Jonathan's Dream, A Boundless Playground in West Hartford. His immediate reaction of "Let's build on for Jacki" set the ball rolling. Frank set out to find a location for the playground, community support and of course the funding. Since they had to literally dig out the side of a mountain for the playground, they needed to raise an amazing \$750,000!!

Four years later thanks to Frank, Lori, Franks Dad, Stamford Mayor Dannel Malloy and all those who donated and supported, the Grand Opening of Twin Meadows was held on October, 26<sup>th</sup> 2003. This playground was named in honor of Frank and Lori's twin daughters, who can now play side by side with each other and other children.

Our special thanks to the Mercedes and Boundless Playgrounds for teaching our children and our society that all children and people are special, because of who they are not because of their abilities or disabilities.

We, in Cheshire, are VERY excited to announce that our town will be getting our own Boundless Playground called "Kids in Motion"! It will be located 5 minutes from our Clinic Location, but they are in need of Funding support! They are trying to raise \$350,000 and are at \$35,000. Check out their website [www.kidsinmotion.org](http://www.kidsinmotion.org) for their upcoming events or call me for info! 203 272-7862.

## Clinician's Corner

As I sit here welcoming in the sunlight that has recently been non-existent with all the rain that has fallen, I have a chance to reflect on the last two and a half years. Chris and I have met your incredible children and have had a chance to see them develop by using the Hart Walker into children with new found confidence and new found size. I recall my first trial with Bryan Conway in a room full of physical therapists. Talk about an intimidating situation!! Bryan handled it incredibly well showing that he did indeed have the ability and desire to walk. He "wowed" me as well as everyone else present. I have gained incredible respect for your children for their continued desire to stay mobile like their classmates.

I have also had time to reflect on our growth as a small company. Our first year we delivered 10 walkers, our second year 11 walkers and as of June 10<sup>th</sup> we have delivered 9 walkers and have another 9 or 10 pending. Its truly amazing !!! A special thanks to Jen Rogers for taking the initiative to introduce me to the MKII Hart Walker. I really didn't want to get involved with anything else because my life was so full but when Jen's son Timmy, a spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy patient, walked independently, the hair on the back of my neck stood on end. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. The most influential aspect of that experience was the elation seen on Timmy's face that he was walking. From that moment I knew that I was headed for an incredible experience working with very special children. I feel incredibly thankful that I found a passion that brings me great joy . I

thank you for allowing me to be a part of their lives.  
Until next time, stay well and happy.

John

### Clinic Dates for July through October 2006

**Saturday, July 1st**

**Saturday, July 8th**

**Saturday, August 5th**

**Saturday, August 19th**

**Saturday, September 9th**

**Saturday, September 23rd**

**Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Saturday, October 28th**

**\*Remember all Clinics are held at our Cheshire location, check our website for directions or call us. Clinic dates may be subject to change.**

**Website: [www.greatstridesforcp.com](http://www.greatstridesforcp.com)**

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