

# Parent-to-Parent Support

### Meet the family:

Mother: Linda

Stepfather: Brian

Father: Greg

Children: Michael, 15, hearing  
Lexi, 13, deaf, profound  
Sean, 10, hearing  
Madeline, 9, hearing

Mode of communication:  
ASL/Pidgin

Newborn Screening:  
None available

Age at Diagnosis: 6 months

Not aided

### Dear Parent:

It seems so long ago now ... 13 years for that matter. We were a new couple that had just had this beautiful baby girl—Lexi. She was perfect!! I had had a tough pregnancy with complications and bed-rest. Even though it was my first pregnancy, it just didn't feel right. I remember watching Lexi that second day in the hospital and noticing she wouldn't startle. So then I would do things purposely to try to startle her. Nothing.

I knew so early that she was deaf that finding out from a doctor wasn't a big surprise or devastating at first. What was hard was also finding out she had Cerebral Palsy. We were now on a new path that was unknown to either of us. Talk about a trip! We had a force of strangers from the district descend upon us! They were like angels bringing sign language, physical therapy and teaching us to sign.

After six months of home visits, Lexi was ready to start school! I couldn't believe it—this was my baby who wasn't even one yet, and here I was carting her off to a Deaf and Hard of Hearing program with other deaf babies. Yet, the first day, I realized this would be wonderful. It was great to see those other babies and their parents. We weren't alone! I felt like we had a place where people wouldn't stare at us for signing, or have someone come up and tell us what a shame it was that our baby was deaf. That hurt more than anything. I just cared she was here and in my arms at night for stories. I didn't care how I read them to her, she was my miracle and I had her. The rest I would figure out along the way.

She had initially started with hearing aids, but as she got older the aids were no longer useful. Her hearing loss became progressively worse. Although she still had a tiny amount of hearing in one ear, she chose to not keep her hearing aids, and I respected that. I was secretly glad to be done with them. Every time I hugged my daughter, the feedback went off like a personal alarm system!

Since those early days, Lexi has gone to Metro Deaf School in the Twin Cities, and has done really well. She is now 13 and in 6th grade. She is involved in soccer and as many activities as she can. She is well-adjusted and a typical teen in all the ways anyone can be.

I thank God everyday for her and the rest of my kids. Having a special child changes you in ways that I don't think anyone can prepare you for. It's a journey that shouldn't be taken alone. Look for help from family, friends and professionals. Remember to take time for yourself. And, love your child—one day at a time.

Warmest Regards,

**Linda**

*For information about how to connect with a family like this, please contact the Family Support Connection at 1-866-DHOH-KID, or 651-265-2435 in the Twin Cities. Or, you can email [fsc@lifetrackresources.org](mailto:fsc@lifetrackresources.org).*