

Abby

Abby and her mother Michelle have shared an incredible bond since before she was born. While in utero Abby was diagnosed with Tuberculosis which has symptoms that include seizures, intellectual disability, developmental delay, and lung and kidney disease.

Michelle has been Abby's biggest advocate since the moment she learned of her diagnosis and Abby is quite attached to her mother.

Abby began attending Easter Seals MA's Adapted Martial Arts which is a program designed for people of all ages with and without disabilities who want to learn and practice self-defense, stretching, exercise, and relaxation techniques. Abby has always had an affinity for Martial but Adapted Martial Arts was the first time she was able to practice with an instructor.

At first Abby needed her mom by her side throughout the program, but as she became more comfortable, Michelle was able to leave the room and Abby has excelled. Abby immediately felt at ease with our instructors Paul Medeiros, Easter Seals MA President & CEO; and Patrick Remy, Easter Seals MA Youth Services Coordinator. She has even been asked to help instruct the other students on occasion.

"I love practicing the moves but learning meditation has really helped me cope with some of the stress I go through," said Abby, "It really helps me." In fact, Abby loved her experience at Adapted Martial Arts so much she also began participating in two more Easter Seals MA programs: Adapted Swim and Youth Leadership Network. All which have helped her socialize with her peers.

Michelle credits the individualized attention Abby receives at Easter Seals MA for many of her recent successes. For example, Abby had been taking swim lessons since she was very young and a goal for her had been to work on breathing properly while swimming, something she had been struggling with. Abby was able to accomplish this goal within two weeks of participating in Easter Seals MA's Adapted Swim program. Abby was not only incredibly proud to now be swimming with her head in the water like other swimmers she had long admired, but as someone who suffers from seizures, it also made her feel safer.

"The self-confidence Abby has gained through Easter Seals MA programs alone has changed our 5-year plan entirely," said Michelle. "We cannot wait for our next Individualized Education Program meeting, the school is going to be blown away."

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