

Marshall

My son, Marshall, was born in Pensacola, Florida on March 30, 2015 at 37 weeks weighing 5 lbs. 10 oz. Other than being on the smaller side and struggling with feedings Marshall was an incredibly happy and healthy baby for the first year of his life. He was what many would consider the perfect baby, sleeping through the night at three months old. He had no medical concerns and mostly met all milestones on time. Just after his first birthday, I started noticing that he was falling behind socially. He did not say any words, did not play peek-a-boo and did not high five or clap. At 18 months, medical professionals hinted towards the possibility of autism. By the age of 2 Marshall was a poster child for the most common traits of autism. In the year that it took to receive his official diagnosis, severe autism with a language deficiency and sensory processing disorder, my once happy and cheerful child became lost in the darkness of autism. At three years old Marshall struggled with everything. He struggled with sleep, with food, still had no language, and was unable to follow any direction to complete tasks. Marshall would have daily meltdowns where he was inconsolable to the point that he started self-harming, slamming the back of his head into the wall repeatedly, scratching and clawing at his face, and biting himself more than 10 times each day.

As a mother, I had no idea how to bring my son out of the darkness that consumed him, and he had no way of telling me how to help.

The medical professionals told me that Marshall may never talk, that his behavior would become so bad he would have to be medicated, that when I was no longer able to care for him, he would need to be institutionalized. This was the future decided for my son at 3 years old.

In 2019, we were living in Asheville, North Carolina. Once again, our family found ourselves faced with limited resources. Marshall only received 15 minutes of speech therapy and occupational therapy a week – a prescription that was not sufficient. It was then that we found the Meyer Center. Finally, we had hope, and we relocated our family to the upstate. In four years, Marshall has overcome more obstacles than medical professionals ever thought he would. Though he does not have fully functioning language that can be used in a conversation, his speech therapist has helped him develop a vocabulary of over 300 words. Academically, he can write his name with help. Socially, he can recognize and identify his peers, request things he wants and appropriately protest things he does not. Most importantly, he now has the coping mechanisms to self-regulate and he no longer harms himself.





The Meyer Center helped shine the light which brought my son out of the darkness.

As a mother this gift is priceless! The Meyer Center has given him, and our family, a future that we could not imagine. The Meyer Center has become more to us than just his school – it has become our family.

The bonds we have made with teachers, staff, students, and parents is something for which we will forever be grateful. Today, the incidence of autism is 1 in 49. My son is not a number or statistic. He has progressed well beyond the bleak future that had been decided for him at 3 years old. Because of the specialized services offered by the Meyer Center, I now have a sincere hope for the future. **In honor of the Meyer Center's 69th birthday, our goal is to raise \$25,000 to provide funding for teacher and therapy training that will enhance our services to all Meyer Center students, specifically those on the autism spectrum.**

This training, combined with the purchase of specific sensory kits will aid students in learning how to regulate their sensory needs.

As Marshall's mother, I am certain that none of his success would have been possible without the Meyer Center. By supporting the Meyer Center, you give children like my son the skills they need for long-term success. Every donation secures a bright future for the 108 children currently attending the Meyer Center. On behalf of Marshall and my family, thank you.

With much gratitude,

Stephanie

**the
meyer center
works**

The Meyer Center works. We witness it every day. It has made a huge impact in the lives of countless children and families in the Upstate. However, we cannot do what we do without you. Through your donations we have been able to accomplish so much and can continue to grow to meet the needs of the community.

Donate Online at
meyercenter.org

No gift is too small.

The Meyer Center turns obstacles into opportunities, and we need your help to continue Dr. Meyer's vision to help all children reach their maximum potential.

Donate by check, credit card or online at meyercenter.org