

S U C C E S S S T O R I E S



Our Success Stories series was created as a way to communicate with our friends and donors in an efficient, inexpensive format. Each month, we feature one of our programs and the inspiring story of a child whom the program has helped. To be added to the Success Stories email list, add your name to the box on our homepage: www.eliada.org.

Most mothers hear their child say “mama” by the time they celebrate the child’s first birthday. For Catherine Hunt’s parents, that day didn’t come until Catherine was well into her third year. As the result of a language disorder, Catherine was primarily non-verbal and depended heavily on sign language to express herself. She had a difficult time communicating, especially to those outside of her family. Catherine’s parents knew they had to do something to help her before she reached kindergarten, or she might never catch up with her peers.

Catherine’s older sister had participated in Eliada’s More at Four program with great success, but her mother worried that Catherine just wasn’t ready. Despite these fears it was clear that something had to be done, and so it was with some trepidation that Catherine’s parents made the decision to enroll her in More at Four.

Her first few weeks were challenging. Catherine was uneasy in her new environment, and, as one of the smallest children in the class, had some difficulty in feeling comfortable with the other students. Her speech problems were intensified by her initial shyness, and her teachers had trouble understanding her wants and needs.

In just a short period of time, Catherine has made tremendous progress. In partnership with her speech language therapist and her parents, Catherine’s More at Four teachers are helping reinforce language therapy lessons to help her

overcome her speech disorder. She has made tremendous advances with speech sounds and language, which has vastly improved her level of self-confidence and independence. Catherine has become more willing to learn new skills, and is eager to show her classmates and teachers what she is able to do!

Catherine’s teachers, Ms. Jennifer and Ms. Kathy, also worked with her to make her feel more comfortable with other children. As Catherine got to know them, she became more comfortable expressing herself vocally. She has become a friendly child who loves to give hugs and has made lots of new friends. Catherine now engages in extended role play with her peers, and even seeks out teachers and schoolmates for lengthy talks.

Her mother reports that since she began attending More at Four, she has seen Catherine blossom. She is putting multiple words and using sign language infrequently. She greets her teachers and volunteer foster grandparent with hugs, even asking where they are when she is at home. “Mere words cannot express my gratitude for the investment and energy Eliada has put into Catherine’s success,” her mother writes, “Just hearing Catherine say “I love you Mom” tells me I made the right decision and she’s in good hands.”



Catherine - November 2007