



Make a difference in the lives of children like Shawn.

A Difficult Start in Life

Shawn Trudell is a familiar figure at Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital, where he has spent nine months during the 12 years of his life—three months as a “preemie” and six months recovering from three operations since birth.

Shy at first, Shawn is a ray of sunshine to his family and friends who include the hospital staff and his fellow patients.

His story is full of hope, but it didn’t seem that way at first. Born 16 weeks premature to a mother who abused drugs and weighing only 1.3 pounds, Shawn ironically survived because his organs were highly developed as a result of his mother’s drug use. But he had severe breathing difficulties, a hernia, and a hole in his brain. Doctors said he would not develop beyond the intellectual age of a six-month to one-year-old baby.

In 1997, on what was his scheduled birth date, Shawn went home to his foster parents, Dee and Tom Trudell.

Persistence, Determination, and Love

Dee and Tom soon formally adopt Shawn, but would not accept the grim prognosis for the tiny baby they called Peanut. “I felt attached to him the first time I laid eyes on him, and we never believed what the doctors told us early on,” says Dee. “I could see in his eyes that there was something special in him and that he was capable of so much more. He has a disability, but he is not ‘disabled.’”

In addition to his other challenges, Shawn was later diagnosed with cerebral palsy. But he has achieved more than the doctors could have hoped for, thanks in great part to the love and determination of his parents and four brothers and sisters—who work constantly to stimulate and encourage him.

Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital Makes a Difference

Dee and Tom credit the Hospital for much of Shawn’s progress. “Doctor Alter and the staff have done so much to care for Shawn and educate our family about his challenges. We have a wonderful dialogue so we can learn more about his condition and capabilities.”

This summer, Shawn spent eight weeks here recovering from leg and ankle surgery. He returned home in August, ready to start sixth grade at Leonardtown Middle School, where he attends regular and special education classes and now reads at a second grade level. Life is full for him—with family gatherings, school, therapy, and a love of SpongeBob and music.

You Can Make a Difference, Too

Just as Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital has helped Shawn make great strides and achieve as independent a life as possible, you can help us carry on our mission of providing the highest quality of health care for children living with serious and chronic conditions. With your generous gift, you can make a tangible difference in the lives of the thousands of children we serve each year.



Shawn receives constant love and support from his family



Shawn and his brother Robert



Uncle Shawn with Samantha, Mia & Makayla

Please help us make a difference in the lives of seriously ill children. Send your gift today.



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