

So Here We Go . . .

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As a little girl playing with my baby dolls, I always knew that being a mother was at the top of my list of priorities. When I hit 35, I realized my clock was ticking and I needed to make my wish come true. I became pregnant and was on top of the world. I never felt better or was happier. Because of my age, I had an amniocentesis done at 18 weeks and everything came out perfect. I also found out that I was going to have a baby girl.

At 27 weeks I asked my doctor if I could have another ultrasound so that I could see what she looked like. The room became very quiet and the doctor was called. He looked at it and asked me to get dressed and come into his office. He then told me that it looked like my dear baby girl had hydrocephalus – water on the brain – as her ventricles were enlarged. I was referred to a specialist who performed a Level 2 ultrasound every two weeks until her scheduled C-section. Some weeks were good with no enlargement and some weeks were bad with more enlargement. It was a total roller coaster ride for all of us.

Because of a possible pending surgery for a shunt, we were referred to a pediatric neurosurgeon. He basically told us that we didn't need to worry about the hydrocephalus as he could put a shunt in but we needed to think about all of the other issues she would be facing. He said, "You will basically be taking a vegetable home that will need lots of attention." WOW! As you can imagine, the next 12 weeks were unbelievably hard.

Holly was born via C-section on January 8, 1997 and was immediately whisked away to the NICU Unit as she needed to have a cat scan to determine if she had hydrocephalus. A long day was ahead of me as I waited for the results. Around 4 pm., I finally asked my nurse if the doctor had come in to read the results and she told me that he been in that morning. As she did not have hydrocephalus and didn't need surgery, he didn't feel the need to stop by my room and give me the news. I was very relieved when I read his obituary as no other parent would ever have to suffer from his true lack of bedside manner as I did.

Through an MRI the next day, it was determined that Holly had an underdeveloped corpus callosum which would lead to developmental delays. Because she was in the NICU unit, she was put through every test by every doctor you could imagine – cardiologist, geneticists, neurologists, etc.

I brought my bundle of love home and just loved her and watched her develop the best she could. Holly was late sitting, crawling, walking, and talking. As I really didn't have anyone to compare it to, I wasn't that concerned . . . I was too busy just loving her and loving being a Mom!

At her 2 year check up – she was 2.4 years – I proudly told the doctor that she had about 18 words even though that was an exaggeration on my part. OOPPSS . . . she should have had about 250 at the time . . . I couldn't even exaggerate that! We were referred to Child Find and Holly was finally diagnosed as Develop-

mentally Delayed at age 3. The therapies – speech, OT, and PT each three times a week began. We eventually added sensory integration and social group therapy as well. I was doing the best I could to help my Holly to be the most she could possibly be. My belief was that I would push her as far as she could go without breaking her spirit! This roller coaster continued for the next ten years. Yes, we did see improvements but not the real changes we were looking for.

By age 13, I was done with testing and therapies that were not making any improvements. I just wanted her to be happy and well adjusted and we would deal with the quirks in the best way we could. In spite of it all, Holly was very happy and loving as long as she was in her 'comfort zone.'

Because of her difficulty in school and problems with reading comprehension, it was suggested that I have her eyes checked for tracking issues. She went through the testing and the doctor said that there may be some tracking issues but she felt there were other issues that needed to be addressed and referred us to Dr. Leah Light. We did the additional testing with Dr. Light's staff.

I will never forget the day we went for our results with Dr. Light – December 22, 1999. She went over all of the results and started talking about lack of integration of primary reflexes and that there was some wonderful therapy available to help with these issues. I politely listened while inside saying, "Yeah, right, and where do we go for this and how do they do it and how much is this going to cost me and what in the heck is it going to do for her?" But I was also somewhat intrigued and went on the internet that night and did some research and was very excited about what I was reading. When I found a checklist of signs of neuro-developmental delay I was shocked – 33 of the 35 things on the list applied to Holly! I thought, "I have got to check this out!"

After all these years of therapy, I didn't want to do another long drawn out therapy program that we may or may not see results . . . I wanted to see immediate results so that I would be inspired to continue on. Dr. Light told me that we could do a Home Program with her or we could go to an intensive Masgutova Family Conference and be worked on by Core Specialists for eight days. The eight day intensive was the choice we made. We were on a plane to California on January 7, 2000 and started our first day of camp on January 8, 2000 – Holly's 13th birthday. What a fabulous birthday present it was and continues to be for us!

At this point, she still had downcast eyes, rolled shoulders, foot pronation, poor balance, poor coordination, poor handwriting skills, learning difficulties, awkward gait, couldn't cope with change, anxiety, poor social skills, hypersensitivity to light and sound and touch, and was slow in processing information.

We started the Family Conference and within three days I was seeing amazing changes. Holly had spent hours in PT trying to learn to jump flat-footed off a foot high block but could never master it. On day three of the Conference, she was standing tall on a bench and said, "Watch me jump!" It scared me as it was a cement floor and she had never successfully jumped from anything that high. WOW, she landed a perfect 10 with both feet flat! She also was starting to come out of her shell and make conversation and eye contact with her therapists and other children. She was smiling and interacting in a way I had never seen before. She could now run like a little gazelle instead of the unsteady awkward gait she had before. By the time we got home she was doing jumping jacks, jump roping, and somersaults. These were all huge gains for her in a very short period of time.

The changes that people saw when we came back from Family Camp were unbelievable. Our very special guardian angel, Donna Wexler, who was Holly's Speech Therapist/Social Instructor/Lifeline and dear friend since age four, gives her observation:

"I was amazed when Holly walked into our clinic after the first MNRI® Family Conference experience with a smile on her face, her head up, and her voice audible. Watching in amazement, my mind wandered back to the previous problems I saw in Holly at four years of age. As a very young child, Holly presented with severe apraxia of speech. She had great difficulty learning to form words and her oral motor skills were weak. She drooled profusely and appeared



Holly Borsch today.

unaware of this problem. In addition to her difficulty with communication, she had extreme difficulty in regulating her body, often jumping about the room, moving from place to place with great disorganization. As she improved, she was able to communicate; however, she continued to have difficulty regulating her volume, speaking in complete sentences, and thinking about others. She did not look at her communication partners and found interacting with other children very difficult.

In contrast, as she entered the clinic after her first MNRI® Family Conference, she began greeting everyone she knew. Previously, Holly had walked in with her head down not looking at or talking to anyone. In addition, I noticed a change in her gait, her facial affect, and the clarity of her speech. As I watched in amazement over the next few years, I began commenting on the changes in Holly's self-awareness and social interaction.

Many of the skills I had been teaching Holly were suddenly falling into place. Holly was no longer afraid to speak to others. She started to express a desire to be with her peers and she began demonstrating creative imagination through both written and verbal storytelling. Her creativity had been released!

After watching on the sidelines for a year or so, I decided I needed to take some MNRI® courses. As I began to use this work with my patients, I started to see astounding results. The work not only helped to integrate reflexes but also made it blatantly clear to me that teaching 'speech/language' skills were futile without involving the rest of the body. When I was in graduate school, the teaching was only about higher cognitive functioning. Sadly, I believe this continues to this day.

I now have a partner in reaching out to other professionals to let them know that children and adults can be helped by this approach to healing. I am seeing remarkable progress with my students who are receiving 'whole body' intervention and improvement in my speech therapy students is moving at a remarkably faster rate. I am grateful to Holly and her Mom for introducing me and many of my colleagues to this effective approach."

In the past three years we have spent much time on our own massage table and also have had the opportunity to attend some other Family Camps. At each one, we see reflexes that have been integrated and stayed integrated and huge progress in so many other areas.

I wish I had known about Dr. Magustova's work when Holly was young as it would have saved lots of time and tears. However, it has also showed me that it is never too late for your body to make wonderful changes.

Because of Holly's successes, I wanted each and every parent with a special needs child to know about this wonderful work. I also wanted to help therapists get training in these methods to add to their tool boxes. I took the paperwork that the Institute had drawn up to start a non profit organization and turned it into Bridge to Healing Foundation, Inc.

Bridge to Healing Foundation (BTH) is a (c)(3) non profit organization that was formed to help people do their own fundraising using BTH as their vehicle for tax deductible donations. All checks are made payable to Bridge to Healing thus making the donation tax deductible to the donor. BTH keeps 10% as a way to raise our own funds to provide scholarship opportunities for families and therapists. A check is then issued to you and/or the place providing the therapy.



Amazing story of a growth of an amazing girl... Congratulations to Holly – she is a real Winner coming from a long way and showing the world her inner strength and desire! Thank you for setting such an example for others! Our gratitude also goes to Tricia, her Mom for support of the MNRI® program. – The MNRI® Team