

October 18, 2018

Dear Colorado Community,

Our family owes a great thank you to Foothills Gateway, the Early Intervention team, and the donors that make funding for our unique children possible. Our unique baby girl Lucy has been gifted with love and support from this incredible nonprofit and the amazing people involved and we are forever grateful.

We want to share our journey with you to show how much Foothills Gateway funding and the Early Intervention team changed our lives for the better. Our family of three welcomed Lucy in March 2017. She came fast and furiously into the world and it was love at first sight.

We knew right away that something was different. Lucy didn't cry and her head was small and misshapen. As we waited for our appointments at Children's Hospital, our family was in full baby bliss as Lucy was quiet but sweet.

The word microcephaly was whispered to us by doctors and driven by fear, I searched the internet for help. Wow, the internet can be scary during times of uncertainty. I learned that Lucy needed early intervention as soon as possible. I found the Foothills Gateway referral link and sent a desperate email message for help. They emailed a response immediately and the Early Intervention team called, scheduled an evaluation, and came to hold our hands as we took a tough look at Lucy's developmental delays.

Lucy began Early Intervention Services through Foothills Gateway at six weeks old. We were welcomed into the Foothills Gateway family and learned they would walk Lucy's life journey with us, supporting her needs from birth to death. Relief washed over family as we learned we are not alone. Their tender, loving, care helped us learn more about the Children's Hospital Genetics findings of a rare spontaneous change to Lucy's genes called 1q43q44 deletion syndrome. There is only one other person in Colorado with this syndrome and they are now friends.

With the help of Lucy's amazing physical therapist, occupational therapist, emotional therapist, nutritionist, and a service coordinator, Lucy has grown into a happy and thriving 18 month old. They have helped her engage in her world and learn to enjoy it. During our journey, this team has helped us think outside the box and find engaging therapies to help her make connections in her brain and develop much needed skills.

Lucy's biggest developmental leaps have come since she has been gifted with two unique and non-insurance benefited therapies through an amazing grant given by Foothills Gateway donors. Lucy has been going to massage therapy and water physical therapy because of this grant. The massage therapy time is helping her to wake up her hands and feet. She smiles from ear to ear while her massage therapist slowly introduces different textures, sensations, and healing touch weekly. She is also engaged in her weekly water physical therapy experience. Lucy shines here and

loves every single minute in the water. She is kicking her legs on command and has even stood independently as she learns to find her midline – yahoo!

These therapies are helping Lucy to defy gravity and build core strength leading to her new found ability to sit independently and play with toys around her. These two amazing therapists specialize in working with children with disabilities and their unconditional love and understanding of her nonverbal cues have made Lucy thrive in their care.

Without the support of Foothills Gateway funding and the Early Intervention team's constant brainstorming and help, Lucy would not have the opportunities to explore her world so fully. Our family would not be able to afford her growing therapies and needs. The funding and support our two-full-time-working-parent family has received has given us the opportunity to enjoy life with Lucy and big sister Eva every day.

Today, Lucy can sit in the grocery cart, sit in a highchair at a restaurant, and sit in the swing at the park. She can play dolls with her sister, eat dinner at the table with our family, and sit under the tree in our yard enjoying the sights around her.

We are living life to the fullest. The love and community support is well beyond anything we could have imagined. Our sweet baby Lucy is thriving, happy, and meeting milestones on her own timeline. We celebrate the 'inch stones' Lucy meets together as a community.

The saying 'it takes a village to raise a family' has never rang more true as with Lucy. She has had an incredible first year of life. We've learned so much about unconditional love, friendship, and kindness.

Our family thanks Foothills Gateway, the Early Intervention Team, and all the donors that have given us this amazing gift of learning and support.

♥ **The Funk Family**

Shannon, Tracy, Eva, and Lucy