Lillie’s Story

Every mile Lillie walks is special. That’s because just a few years ago, Lillie couldn’t walk at all. Born prematurely and with a host of complications, Lillie was diagnosed with cerebral palsy when she was a year old.

Lillie started therapy immediately, but when her family’s income disqualified her for Medicaid, her therapy stopped. Her parents didn’t want to hurt Lillie’s progress, but they struggled to find a place that would accept their private insurance. When they were referred to United Way, Lillie and her family not only found care that would work with their insurance, they found what they call a miracle.

Through United Way, Lillie gets increased therapy, both physical and occupational, plus access to resources, like prosthetics, a special bicycle and a summer camp tailored to Lillie’s needs. And, Lillie gets a level of care and support that her parents say makes all the difference. “My goal for Lillie is to get her as much support and care now when she’s younger and developing so she can be as normal an adult as possible,” Lillie’s dad says. “I tell her that I want her to do these things so that she can live life to the fullest. Maybe one day when I’m older, she’ll take care of me.”

Her parents are amazed at the progress nine-year old Lillie has made in the last few years. They’ve seen their daughter’s motor skills improve, her strength increase and her confidence grow. But one of the most incredible sights was Lillie, walker and crutches thrown aside, rounding the track at school to complete a mile on her own.

“The first time we saw her walking, I pretty much lost it and cried,” says Lillie’s mom. “That’s all I’ve ever really wanted for her, just to be able to walk, and she’s doing that.” I’ve had grown men come up almost in tears because they can’t believe how far she’s come in such a short time,” Lillie’s dad adds. “When you see how far she’s come, it is truly a miracle.”