

### MISSION MOMENT: MEET OLIVIA



Olivia Ornelas has been a firecracker since the day she was born. Even though she is only three years old, she has showed so much fight, resilience, and tenacity in her few years that Olivia's parents lovingly refer to her as their "honey badger". A traumatic birth experience left Olivia with a brachial plexus injury (Erb's Palsy) which damaged the nerves in her left arm and left her with zero movement or functional use in that extremity. The brachial plexus is a complex network of nerves that sends signals and information to the body. This type of injury occurs when these nerves are stretched, compressed, or in the most serious cases (and what happened to Olivia), torn away from the spinal cord. Olivia's parents, Christabelle and Gonsalo, were overwhelmed with the prognosis and turned to Midland Children's Rehabilitation Center for help.

Olivia had her first evaluation at MCRC at only two weeks old and began working with Physical Therapist, Brooke, soon after. When she was four months old, she underwent an eight hour nerve transfer surgery at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston to repair some of the nerve damage. The surgery consisted of harvesting nerves from both legs and transplanting them into the arm. Unfortunately, Olivia was left with permanent damage and the surgeons were uncertain of what remaining arm function she would have or if she would be able to attain new movement. This is when her journey at MCRC really began. After the surgery, she began seeing Occupational Therapist, Leigha, in conjunction with her physical therapy with Brooke. Her therapy focused on assisting the left arm to be included during all gross and fine motor activities in order to facilitate new voluntary movement in the arm.

After three years of weekly therapy at MCRC and daily exercises and stretching at home, Olivia has made incredible gains and has overcome obstacles her parents had never thought possible. They attribute every little success to the fearless child they are raising, but also to the two women who have been her biggest cheerleaders since day one: her therapists, Brooke and Leigha. From the beginning, these ladies took a proactive approach and were in constant contact with Olivia's doctors to make sure she was receiving the best possible care and therapy for her injury. Her therapists credit Olivia's persistence and fierce personality to her adaptability, but also her parents' dedication to completing the daily exercises in their home. "The parent carry over piece is SO pivotal and has made the difference between little use of the arm to phenomenal results and ability," said Leigha Foote, O.T.R.

Olivia's parents are grateful to MCRC for giving their daughter confidence and helping her accomplish tasks that once seemed impossible. The family knows that Olivia has a long road ahead of her - including the likelihood of additional surgeries - and that she will face challenges every single day. But they also know that Olivia has the tools, personality, and the support of her family and therapists at MCRC to get her through any obstacle. They are so proud of Olivia and all that she has overcome; she has such a bright future ahead of her. We can't wait to see what more this little "honey badger" can do!

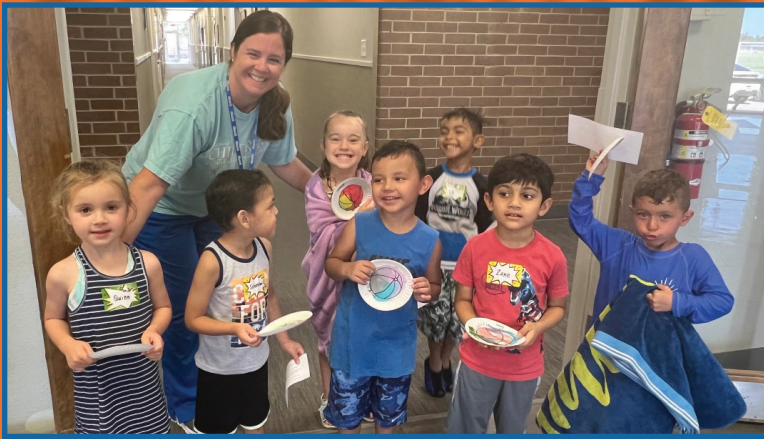


"It is such a blessing to have the support of Olivia's therapists at MCRC! We can say, 'Here is what we are struggling with'...and then have them teach us innovative ways for Olivia to adapt to that particular challenge."

-Christabelle, Olivia's mom



# CAMP TALK-A-LOT



During the summer, our Speech Language Pathologists at MCRC led a 10-week speech program called “Camp Talk-a-Lot”. This program was intended to be an adapted extracurricular activity that allowed the children to engage in age-appropriate play while increasing their speech and language skills. Each weekly session consisted of a fun weekly theme - from camping to the beach to insects - and included a specific book, craft, and snack activity to go along with the theme. 59 students participated in this program and the camp concluded with popsicles and water activities! Program objectives included: answering “WH questions” (who/what/when/where/why); improving overall vocabulary; following simple and complex directions; targeting specific speech sounds in a group setting for increased carry over; and building social skills. A whole lot of fun (and talking!) was had by all! We are so grateful to have such amazing Speech Therapists on staff at MCRC!



## FROM THE HEART

MCRC has always been blessed with the best volunteers, and this summer was no exception! For the “Camp Talk-a-Lot” program, the Speech Therapists were assisted by 15 amazing student volunteers. Several volunteers expressed how much they enjoyed working with the camp participants and appreciated the opportunity to see a glimpse of what goes on behind the scenes at MCRC. The camp participants and therapists alike loved seeing their smiling faces each week. A big thank you to these fantastic volunteers!

Marisela, one of the student volunteers, said, “My favorite part of volunteering is seeing how sweet the employees are and how they treat their patients. I actually received therapy at MCRC when I was younger, and I was interested in volunteering so I could learn more about ALL the services offered.” Another volunteer, Aubrey, has aspirations of becoming a speech pathologist. Abby, a new volunteer this year, was inspired by her mom to get involved with MCRC and is looking forward to continuing her volunteer role with the Hippotherapy Program.





# MILES FOR MCRC

“Miles for MCRC” is a fundraising partnership with Midlander Abraham “Abe” Bejil. Abe is an avid runner who will be participating in a 240 mile ultra marathon in Moab, UT on October 13-18. His goal is to raise money and awareness for MCRC and the services we provide for our community.

“I am extremely excited to announce my partnership with Midland Children’s Rehabilitation Center and my Moab 240 run. These past few years, I’ve been blessed to run some amazing ultra marathon races and use these races to promote local non-profit organizations and their services. The Moab 240 is the ultimate test of endurance. Runners will tackle 238.8 miles of Utah’s rugged terrain, including desert, canyons, slick rock, and two mountain ranges, all while surrounded by the stunning landscape of Canyonlands and Arches National Park. This notoriously difficult course is not for the faint of heart, as endurance runners may face harsh weather conditions and other challenges along the way.”



Abe’s fundraising goal is \$12,240 (for 240 miles!) If you wish to donate to this fundraiser, you can do so through our website (via QR code on the back of this letter) or through our fundraising page on Instagram: @midlandchildrens. Not much time is left until the big race! Help Abe reach his goal of raising money for MCRC “one step at a time”! You can follow along on his journey through his Instagram page: @mr.abe.bejil.

“These kids at MCRC are my “why”: WHY I am running this race and WHY I will continue to push on just like they do every single day despite whatever obstacles they may face. They are an inspiration to me and the reason I am choosing to run miles for MCRC.” -Abe

## COMMUNITY IMPACT

January - June 2023



## MID-YEAR REPORT

The operating budget for 2023 is approximately \$2,745,500. In the first six months of 2023, we have received 60% of our projected income, which is approximately \$1,645,286. Our most recent fundraiser, Pumpjack Paradise, which was held on March 4 of this year, was a HUGE success! We are so grateful for the continued support we have received this year from not only our parents and donors, but our community as a whole. Because of your generosity, we may continue to dramatically improve the lives of the children in our community without the need to bill their families. We anticipate serving over 500 children this year in our best efforts to continue our mission. Thank you for choosing to be part of MCRC’s life-changing work!

<COMPANY NAME>  
<SALUTATION>  
<ADDRESS>  
<CITY>, <STATE> <ZIP>

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

The race is on! This event will be a fun evening of BBQ, dancing, and racing to raffle prizes held in our very own backyard at MCRC! Learn more at [www.midlandchildrens.org](http://www.midlandchildrens.org) (Support: Take the Money and Run)



### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7

Please join us for the MCRC Hippotherapy Play Day! This annual event allows our students to showcase all they have been learning. 9am-12pm at the MCRC Barn (4407 Meadowlark Ln.)



### OCTOBER 13 - 18

Help our friend, Abe Bejil, as he runs a 240 mile ultra marathon to raise money and awareness for MCRC. Learn how you can support this fundraiser inside this edition!

**SCAN HERE TO DONATE!**

