

## SPOTLIGHT

# *Empowering Families with Special Needs*

**Rose Mary Lumm was just 17 weeks into her pregnancy with twins when Baby A, named Andrew,** was diagnosed with club feet, spina bifida and enlarged ventricles around his brain (indicative of hydrocephaly, an abnormal buildup of cerebrospinal fluid). She and her husband, David, spent months meeting with various specialists to learn about their baby's condition and available resources, but much to their dismay their family income was too high to qualify for most types of assistance.

That all changed soon after Andrew's birth on September 24, 2004, at Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children. Our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit team, recognizing Andrew's needs for specialized services, connected the Lumms to our Howard Phillips Center for Children & Families. As part of our Arnold Palmer Hospital, the Howard Phillips Center offers six specialized programs at little or no cost. The Lumms would soon discover that the center's Developmental Center for Infants & Children/Early Steps program was exactly what they needed.

Early Steps provides early intervention for children who have or are at risk for a developmental delay or special need. Through the program, the Lumms would learn about Andrew's development, how to overcome delays and how to access appropriate services and support. Meanwhile, Andrew would strengthen his intellectual, physical, emotional, social and sensory abilities.

Unique to Early Steps, treatment often takes place right at home. Soon a physical therapist was teaching Rose Mary how to massage the scar on Andrew's back. This "badge of courage" as the family calls it was the result of his spina bifida surgery to tuck in exposed nerves. The therapist also showed Rose Mary how to perform therapeutic stretches on Andrew, and more importantly, how to properly hold him in order to preserve his hip sockets. These therapeutic efforts, no matter how small, made all the difference in his recovery. Each week, Rose Mary watched Andrew blossom as his motor skills improved.





IN 2014, MORE THAN 15,000 CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS WERE SERVED BY THE HOWARD PHILLIPS CENTER THROUGH ITS SIX SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS:

**The Developmental Center for Infants & Children/Early Steps**

**Healthy Families Orange**

**Teen Xpress**

**The Healing Tree**

**Child Protection Team**

**The Children's Advocacy Center**

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8 Rose Mary applauds Early Steps for focusing on much more than just the children. She was excited to see how the program also empowers families to set goals and participate in the child's developmental milestones. Since Andrew's treatments were done at home, each session became a Lumm family affair. Andrew's twin sister, Katelyn, and older brother, Ryan, eagerly looked forward to weekly therapist visits because of the creative ways in which they involved the entire family.

*"One time, all the kids were playing band and Andrew was on drums to stretch out his spine, but he had no idea what he was doing was actually beneficial. They all just thought it was playtime, and I thought that was so beautiful."*

Today, Andrew is a joyful, active 11-year-old with a smile that could light up any room. He currently attends outpatient therapy at Arnold Palmer Hospital and keeps a very busy schedule. Andrew plays on the Wheelcats basketball team through Orange County Public Schools and Special Olympics. He also plays baseball, takes piano lessons and is on a swim team.

Though Andrew still requires therapy and will always have challenges to overcome, Rose Mary is thankful for Early Steps.

Beyond the therapy sessions, the program connected the Lumms to resources, social events and more importantly, other families in the community. Rose Mary believes in the program so much that she is now a part-time Family Resource Specialist with Early Steps. The program requires that a member of their team be a parent who has had a child go through Early Steps. In her role, Rose Mary not only



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**– Rose Mary Lumm**