

Becoming More Self-Reliant



Jared Templeton, a 2001 high school honors graduate, uses a baclofen pump to treat his spasticity as a result of cerebral palsy. Here, he visits with Dr. Philip Gates at the Shreveport Shriners Hospital.

(NAPSA)—Jared Templeton, a cerebral palsy patient, was becoming so sleepy from his medications to keep his spasticity under control that he had lost his vocabulary and even his sense of humor.

After receiving a baclofen pump in July 2000 at the Shriners Hospital for Children in Shreveport, La., he excelled at every subject and graduated from high school in June 2001.

"I never thought I would ever get to graduate, let alone graduate with honors," said Jared, the "J-Man," as his friends call him. His mother, Ann, related, "Since receiving the pump, Jared has become more self-reliant and independent. His teachers are so proud of him. They've noticed such a drastic change. His mental acuity is better and his personality, quick wit and quirky sense of humor are back in full force. It's like night and day."

Baclofen pumps are used to treat spasticity in children with cerebral palsy or brain injury. Lioresal (baclofen) intrathecal is administered to the child and goes directly to the spinal cord through a programmable pump into a small catheter. It is placed about one inch below the skin near the waistline. The patient is evaluated

every two to three months for follow-up and refills of baclofen. Though the pump is not a cure, it has been quite successful in relieving children of their spasticity.

Jared is one of 10 patients who has received the baclofen pump at Shreveport Hospital since the program began in 1999. According to Philip Gates, M.D., assistant chief of staff, "Jared was an excellent candidate because he wears his braces faithfully and has good follow-through with his therapy."

Jared's dream is to one day earn a college degree in mass communications, with a minor in music.

For more information on Shriners' network of 22 hospitals that provide medical care and services totally free of charge to children with orthopaedic problems, burns and spinal cord injuries, write to: Shriners International Headquarters, Public Relations Dept., 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa FL 33607, or visit the Web site at www.shrinershq.org. Treatment is provided to children under age 18 without regard to race, religion or relationship to a Shriner.

If you know a child Shriners can help, call 1-800-237-5055 in the United States or 1-800-361-7256 in Canada.