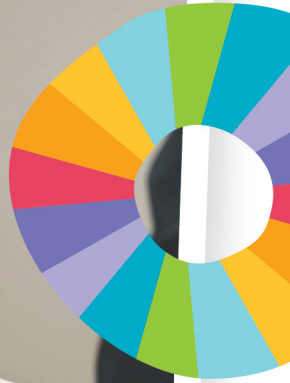


FALL 2023



great LIFE



DEFYING THE ODDS – ADAM'S JOURNEY TO THE FINISH LINE!

ChildServe's therapy team helps kids be kids no matter their diagnosis

Whether he is singing in choir, competing in track and field or helping manage his high school football or basketball teams, Adam's determination to defy the odds brings inspiration to everyone he meets.

Adam was born with Spina Bifida, Hydrocephalus, Chiari Malformation, club feet and one kidney. In 4th grade, he developed anxiety. Combined, these diagnoses have impacted Adam's mobility, strength and development.

"When Adam was born, we were told he had paralysis from his knees down... eliminating his ability to walk," said Adam's mom, Trina. "As a toddler, he had his first of six hip surgeries. Our biggest goal has always been for him to stand using his arm crutches or stander."

Despite these life-altering conditions, Adam has persevered to become the strong and witty high school student he is today. Since 2017, Adam has put in countless hours of work with ChildServe's therapy team to build his own version of *great* life and overcome barriers to participate in the activities he loves, like sports!

"If a sports topic is being discussed, Adam will usually be motivated to complete any task during therapy," said Trina. "He and his physical therapist Ansley DeVrieze have a unique bond,

almost like a sibling rivalry! He loves talking about his favorite football teams and joking with Ansley. His therapy team has done a great job of getting creative and using his interests to help him finish his reps. For example, sitting on a balance ball and throwing a football, is just 'fun' to him, but it's really helping him develop core strength."

Adam has reached many goals through years of therapy, including being knowledgeable of his conditions in order to understand his body's abilities and take advantage of his strengths. Today, you'll find Adam in physical therapy standing tall with assistance for minutes at a time and side-stepping using the parallel bars while his mom plays the "Cupid Shuffle."

Adam and his physical therapist, Ansley



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"We consider all our friends at ChildServe part of our family! They accept us on our hard days, cheer us up on our sad days, and smile with us through our triumphs."

— Adam's mom, Trina

Adam's therapy team attending his high school track meet



In high school, Adam enjoys using his wheelchair to race in adaptive track and field. Ansley helps him understand his body posture and practice different strengthening techniques to help him feel prepared for his meets, where he competes against other kids using wheelchairs. With assistance from ChildServe Rehab Tech Brooke Lucas, Ansley and Adam have even taken their therapy sessions outside to practice racing down the sidewalk.

"Ansley was the official starter while Adam and Brooke raced against each other in wheelchairs to simulate a track and field meet," said Trina. "Adam's therapy team also came to cheer him on at one of his high school track meets in Williamsburg. We've been lucky to watch Adam grow up receiving services at ChildServe. We're grateful to the many wonderful therapists that we've met who've helped him achieve his goals."

Grandon Charitable Foundation Supports Kids Like Adam

Amazing journeys like Adam's wouldn't be possible without the generosity of donors in our community like the Grandon Charitable Foundation. The Grandon Charitable Foundation awarded ChildServe a grant of nearly \$30,000 to help fund start-up costs for pediatric physical therapy at the ChildServe's new Cedar Rapids location. With this grant, ChildServe was able to purchase specialty therapy equipment to help kids with a variety of abilities better access their world, participate in the activities they love and live a more independent life. This grant will impact nearly 200 children at ChildServe – Cedar Rapids by summer 2024.

To help more kids with a variety of special healthcare needs defy the odds like Adam, donate today at childserve.org/giving



Sara Volz, Director of Development; Paige Richards, Clinical Team Lead; Andrea Orth, President of the Grandon Charitable Foundation and Sarah Hoeger, Site Manager

DOUBLE THE IMPACT FOR ONE CHILDSERVE – CEDAR RAPIDS FAMILY

Five-year-old twins Jordyn and Rhyen have personalities that light up any room they walk, twirl or dance into! Their bright smiles, contagious giggles and warm hearts bring our team at ChildServe so much joy.

The twins, who both have autism, haven't always had an easy time sharing their personalities due to delayed communication and social skills. Their mom, Korie, hoped that a partnership with ChildServe would help the girls find unique ways to communicate and connect with their world.

"Our biggest goal for Jordyn was to work on social skills like learning to share and communicate with her peers," said Korie. "Rhyen had limited communication skills. By the time she was three, it was still a guessing game to understand what she wanted and needed."

The girls spend a combined total of 40 hours a week receiving care in ChildServe's Autism Program, and speech, occupational and physical therapies. After beginning services at ChildServe – Iowa City in 2021 and transitioning to ChildServe – Cedar Rapids in early 2023, Korie is thrilled to see both girls making strides toward their goals.

"Jordyn has expanded her level of communication, which has allowed her to become more independent and improve her connection with family and peers. We've seen a big improvement in her willingness to take turns and interact socially with others.



Rhyen & Jordan with their mom Korie & therapist

"Rhyen has worked hard in speech therapy to become a pro at using her communication device. She's now able to communicate what she wants and needs, and expressing her feelings is no longer a barrier.

"While we've got a long road ahead, we can see improvement with every new connection, sound, word and phrase. Things that seemed impossible less than a year ago have become possible. The impact from every therapist we've encountered at ChildServe is amazing! They've taken the time to get to know our family and our unique needs. The team at ChildServe is fantastic, and we're so grateful for the love and support they show our girls."

ChildServe Kids Shine Bright on Stage at Local Inclusive Event!

A big round of applause goes out to all of the kids and young adults who performed at the Iowa City Downtown District Block Party earlier this year! ChildServe therapists had a great time helping kids prepare amazing talents like comedy, fashion design, singing and dancing.

ChildServe Therapy Dog, Tucker, even helped kids show off their communication talents on stage. Kids helped Tucker showcase special tricks through a series of obstacles using voice commands. The roar from the crowd left all the individuals and our team with big grins and full hearts. We're grateful to the Iowa City community for providing inclusive and welcoming opportunities for children of all abilities and their families!





ChildServe
2350 Oakdale Blvd
Coralville, IA 52241

childserve.org

OUR MISSION

We partner with families to help children with special healthcare needs live a *great* life.



If you have an update to your contact information, please contact us at foundation@childserve.org.



MORE SPACE... MORE KIDS... MORE IMPACT!

Anticipation is growing at ChildServe – Iowa City as we await the opportunity to greet families in our expanded space in early spring 2024!

The 13,000-square-foot expansion project will increase access to outpatient therapy services, including speech, occupational and mental health therapy, as well as autism and applied behavior analysis services. The addition of bigger treatment spaces that are equipped with specialty pediatric equipment will allow many kids and their families in our community to access and receive life-changing care.

There's more work to be done! If you'd like to be part of helping this project come to life, reach out to **Sara Volz** at saravolz@childserve.org


great
LIFE