

## Sophie Strong

BY KASEY FLICKER

We last wrote to the Tualatin Life back in 2012. We were organizing the Tuberous Sclerosis Complex fundraising walk for families in Oregon living with TSC as well as funding research into cures for other diseases like epilepsy, autism and cancer. In 2008, our little Sophie was diagnosed with TSC at four months old. In her first two years of life she had two brain surgeries at UCLA Medical Center.

TSC is defined as a genetic disorder that causes non-malignant tumors to form in many different organs, primarily in the brain, eyes, heart, kidney, skin and lungs. Sophie battled with seizures throughout her infant and toddler years and she struggled with severe dyspraxia.

Fast Forward to 2016 and Sophie's seizures are currently under control and she continues to be an inspiration to us. She is in the first grade at Bridgeport Elementary School and is having a terrific year. With the help of the wonderful staff at Bridgeport, Sophie is able to have inclusion with her classmates and spend most of the day in her main classroom.

She participates in Dance and Soccer, Swims at Stafford Hills and absolutely loves to have play dates with her friends from Bridgeport Elementary. You can also find Sophie wrestling on the couch with her older brother Jaden or jumping on the trampoline.

Managing Sophie's disease is a challenge however. We continue to make annual trips to UCLA Medical Center for brain and kidney checkups. Our concern for her seizures to return is exhausting. She has scheduled MRI's on her brain and kidneys two times a year at Legacy Emmanuel and she attends two therapies weekly to work on her speech and fine motor delays. Through all of this, we still hear Sophie's happiness in her laughter every day.

Our family recently got back from Sophie's Make a Wish trip to Hawaii. Sophie's wish was to Hula dance on the beach and hang out with Mickey and Minnie at the Disney Resort. Wish granted! Make a Wish was a wonderful experience for Sophie and our family and we can't say enough about the volunteers that donate their time to make each wish so special.

Sophie continues to be strong and her support system is amazing. From family, to friends, to neighbors, to educators, to therapists, they all continue to dedicate their time to help Sophie



The Flicker Family.



Sophie's story from 2012 Tualatin Life article.

thrive. Dealing with Sophie's TSC takes a village of support and we are certainly overwhelmed with the compassion and sense of togetherness we feel in our community.

Thank You to Tualatin Life for giving us a platform to share our story and thank you to Sophie for her great big smile and the joy she shares with all us.



The Flickers, (Kasey, Jami, Jaden & Sophie)