

## NEWS FROM YOUR ELKS MAJOR PROJECT . . .

### *"Elks - Made A Difference" in family's life:*

Dear California-Hawaii Elks,

By September of this year every day was a struggle with my son Patrick, and I didn't know where to turn. My youngest son was miserable and although we had tried several things, nothing made a difference. His pediatrician and the Monterey County Infant Program recognized that there was a delay but he did not qualify for any help. Our situation was miserable – we had a child who always cried, rarely slept, seemed to understand no language, couldn't walk, battled constant constipation and who couldn't even withstand life's daily stresses.

From the first visit, Pam Flagg [Occupational Therapist] made incredible changes in the life of my son. Within 10 minutes of being in the same room with him she was able to identify many of his challenges and had really effective methods for helping him. Pam went out of her way to see us every week because our time here was so short. She was a veritable treasure chest of knowledge on how to improve the quality of my son's life and taught my husband and me ways to better parent our son. She worked with us and assisted us in developing a strong home therapy protocol that we will be able to use as we move across the U.S. Pam was available to help us on the phone any time we had a question, encouraging us to call her and leave a message with any concern, and she always returned the call.

Maureen McGuire [Speech-Language Pathologist] came to our home to work with Patrick for a few sessions and was also a wonderful help. Thankfully, once we got a handle on his sensory issues, my son excelled at every speech session and we all recognized that he did not need her services. For the few times she came, Maureen was an incredibly pleasant person. She "played" with Patrick and got him to speak within minutes of arriving. She had a lot of really good information to share; no question I had was too ridiculous. She was so popular with my other three children they used to all come rushing inside when they would see her van pull up.



**A coin a day so they can walk, talk, see and play!**

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"Patrick"

Our lives are very different now after working with Pam for less than three months. My son is now walking and communicating. At sixteen months old he gave us a hug and a kiss. He responds to his name, can use a few basic signs and understands when people speak to him. He is walking, looking at books and sitting still long enough to hear a story. The change in our home is amazing.

I don't know what the future will hold for my youngest son any more than I do for my other three children. I do know, however, that because of your program Patrick has been given an opportunity to lead a really wonderful life. In working with Pam (and a few sessions with Maureen), he is a really happy little boy.

In closing, I want to thank the individuals responsible for the California-Hawaii Elks Major Project that allowed us to get help for my son. Our family has benefited tremendously from your program, and we are extremely grateful.

Sarah Bermingham

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