

Madden's Story

Madden was born on August 8th, 2011 with genetic profound bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. Madden failed 4 newborn hearing screenings and was referred to our local audiologist and ENT. It was our local specialists who told us, after screening, that Madden had robust hearing and we would never have to worry about his hearing. About 6 months later we noticed Madden wasn't reaching certain milestones and wasn't babbling like other kiddo's his age. At 10 months Madden had an ABR test and was identified with profound bilateral hearing loss. Due to Madden's mis-diagnosis Madden's cochlear implant process was streamlined. Madden was fitted with hearing aids at 11 months and received his first cochlear implant in 2012 at 14 months. It was during those, very quick, 3 months we found Desert Voices. Many years later we hand no idea that this school would change our lives!

Madden started Desert Voices in February 2013 participating in weekly speech therapy sessions. The first day we walked into Desert Voices we were welcomed with open arms and smiling faces by the staff and the other families with kids attending the school. It is just what we needed, and what Madden needed. In August 2013 Madden started attending the toddler program for 2 days a week for a full year and transferred into their full day program in August 2014. Each week Madden would make progress in his language and soon enough he was saying 2, 3- and 4-word sentences. These transitions were huge milestones for Madden and our family. This is because our family lives in Lake Havasu City, Az and Desert Voices is 3 hours away from us. Madden and one of us would travel to Desert Voices weekly and stay in a hotel for the week while the other parent stayed home with Madden's older brother, Mason. We were a divided family during the week and were able to spend the weekends together. We managed this schedule for 3 years until Madden graduated from Desert Voices in 2017.

The 5 years Madden spent at Desert Voices molded him into the young boy he is today. They showed him how to find his voice, encouraged him to use his voice, taught him how to be bold with his voice and celebrated every time they heard his voice. The teachers, speech therapists, and administrators have a true and sincere drive and desire to teach every child at Desert Voices how to hear, listen, and speak. Each week the staff at Desert Voices were feeling more like family and less like staff.

Madden mainstreamed into kindergarten in August 2017, and is now in 2nd grade at Jamaica Elementary School in Lake Havasu City, Az. He is doing fantastic in school and has

already made future goals for himself to participate in Student Council and National Elementary Honor Society. Madden is outspoken, confident and loves to be heard....all of the time. He even has a unique skill of whist at a very young age. Madden enjoys anything that has to do with engineering and water, and loves being with his family. While we are now so far away from this special school that gave so much to Madden and our family, Desert Voices will always be our roots. They will always be family!

Kevin & Naomi McKinney

