

NEXUS CHAMPION CHARLI MURRAY



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At the age of five, Charli had begun to bite her hands out of frustration. By age ten, she progressed to hitting herself during emotional outbursts. Like many children with developmental disorders such as autism, Charli’s self-injurious behaviors resulted from an inability to express feelings such as pain, fear, displeasure, and anxiety.

It was an observant dentist who recommended Nexus to Charli’s father, Brent Murray. The dentist had a friend whose daughter had exhibited similar behaviors, tried several facilities, and finally found help at Nexus. Eager to provide Charli with the support she needed to grow, Brent admitted her to the New Directions program at Nexus Children’s Hospital.

“It was hard leaving because she has separation anxiety,” said Brent. “But everybody at Nexus was great. They did a really good job with her.”

While at Nexus, Charli learned how to regulate her emotions, communicate her needs and feelings, and express herself through her love of music and dance. She even met a major developmental milestone — potty training — as a result of hands-on therapies.

“During her time with Nexus, Charli demonstrated substantial growth in targeted goals as well as her social and programmatic abilities,” said Heather Maguire, Behavioral Specialist Program Manager. “Charli was able to acquire and sustain skills to foster her independence and advocacy for herself. She eagerly partook in therapies and shared her love of music with all who worked with her.”

While she still struggles with the same behavioral challenges, Charli now has a set of cognitive and emotional tools that help her manage strong emotions. Her tenacity and positive mindset contributed to the speed with which she learned to use these tools.

“Charli had a great attitude and showed tremendous determination in her treatments at Nexus,” said Jessica Cardenas, Behavioral Specialist Assistant Program Manager. “She developed the ability to self-regulate during high-stress situations. We are so proud of all her progress and the obstacles she conquered.”

Back home in Oklahoma, Charli is using the skills she acquired at Nexus, and will soon be engaging in ongoing outpatient behavioral therapy. “There’s no quick fix to Charli’s diagnosis,” said Brent. “It takes time and work.”

Thanks to her loving support network and the team at Nexus, Charli has everything she needs to continue growing into a confident and independent young woman.



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