

NEXUS CHAMPION

# MAGNOLIA BRAUN



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**MINDY BRAUN**

Social Worker, True North Program

13-year-old Magnolia arrived at Nexus Children’s Hospital in Houston with unmet psychiatric needs stemming from the medical challenges she had been facing her entire life. Magnolia was living with spina bifida and myelocystocele, which contributed to a neurogenic bowel and bladder. Her mental health was in a dire state, and she needed immediate psychiatric support and help finding meaning in her life.

“Maggie,” as her family calls her, was turned away from several facilities closer to her Florida home and told that psychiatric treatment centers could not support her ongoing medical needs. Maggie’s family was then referred to the True North program at Nexus Children’s Hospital, specifically designed to treat medical, psychiatric, and behavioral needs of children, even if they have been turned down elsewhere. The Nexus team was prepared to help Maggie with the medication management, therapy solutions, psychological evaluations, and behavioral stabilization she needed to feel better.

Maggie stayed at Nexus Children’s Hospital for five and a half months and her family in Florida flew back and forth when they could to show support and participate in her treatment. While at Nexus, Maggie participated in physical, occupational, and speech therapies which she looked forward to every day. She enjoyed spending time with her therapists and formed close friendships with other children in the program during group therapies and activities. Her medical team provided Maggie with new braces to support her legs and spine, which make walking and general movement more comfortable.

**“They took very good care of her and kept her safe — which is exactly what she needed when she was there,”** said Maggie’s mother, Mindy. **“They pulled her out of a very dark place.”**

During her time at Nexus, Maggie participated in many long conversations with her therapists, and the other children in the program who were going through similar mental health situations. She was able to make connections with individuals who understood what she was going through, and was given the outlets she needed to express her emotions in a safe and positive way. Maggie is very artistic and spent lots of time in the Activity Room making beaded art and playing games with her friends. She covered the walls of her room with colorful paintings she had made that told her story and brought her joy.

**“Magnolia made impressive and significant progress while at Nexus,” said Bailey Warner, LMSW social worker for the True North Program. “I have seen her face her fears, try new things, learn effective coping skills, and become a source of encouragement to her peers. She has grown in her ability to advocate for herself and her desire to stay healthy.”**

Maggie is now back with her family and friends in Florida and was excited to see her cat, Desi, again. She is enrolled in outpatient physical and occupational therapies and will also be participating in classes for music and art therapy. **“Just keep going no matter what,”** she tells other children in her situation. **“Things happen for a reason, and they do get better.”**

**TRUE NORTH**  
PROGRAM

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