



THE CHAMPION'S TALE

By Michelle Hamlin

CONNOR IS 20 YEARS OLD, AND THE ELDEST OF OUR THREE CHILDREN. HE WAS BORN A FEW MONTHS PREMATURE AND IT WAS PRETTY CLEAR FROM EARLY ON THAT SOMETHING WAS WRONG.

When we were told Connor had cerebral palsy we didn't really know what that meant. Back then the doctors couldn't tell us what this might mean for Connor in the future.

Was he going to be able to walk, or not? Could he talk? Would he be deaf? What would cerebral palsy mean for him? We had no idea.

Connor has seen firsthand the shifting face of cerebral palsy over the last two decades. When he was born, there was so much uncertainty about the best way to identify and treat cerebral palsy. People didn't know how to talk about it, they didn't know what it was, they were unsure how to deal with it.

Back then there were dedicated staff who did what they could to help Connor, based on what they knew at the time. My husband and I set about finding out all that we could about cerebral palsy, and we know now that Connor certainly missed out in those early years.

We now know that the first months and years of life are critical in the treatment of cerebral palsy. Research has achieved so much and has provided us, and many other parents with far more information.

When Botulinum toxin A treatment became available we jumped at the opportunity to utilise this form of treatment which has helped Connor with his muscles through the years. But the thing that has helped him the most is his ability to communicate. His speech is clear and he has good hearing - that's made a world of difference to him.

Connor is certainly far more expressive and independent than we might have expected. I think it's one of the reasons he's been able to achieve so much. He goes out by himself, he's active in society and really into sports.

Connor is our regional Boccia champion – something we're really proud of.



"If research can help us understand cerebral palsy better, and help parents understand what to expect, then it's vital."

NAME:
CONNOR

20 AGE:
20 YEARS

PREMATURE:
BORN 26 WEEKS

PASSION:
BOCCIA

CP SEVERITY:
GMFCS 4

MOBILITY:
POWERED WHEELCHAIR

HEARING:
GOOD

COMMUNICATION:
GOOD

TREATMENT:
Botulinum toxin A treatment, hydrotherapy, speech therapy