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This is Mason.

Lasting Impressions: Mason's Story

Tiffany experienced a high-risk pregnancy, which led her to delivering her son, Mason, at 32 weeks gestation. He weighed only 3 pounds, 5 ounces. Tiffany felt powerless and helpless when Mason had to stay behind in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) for seven weeks after she was

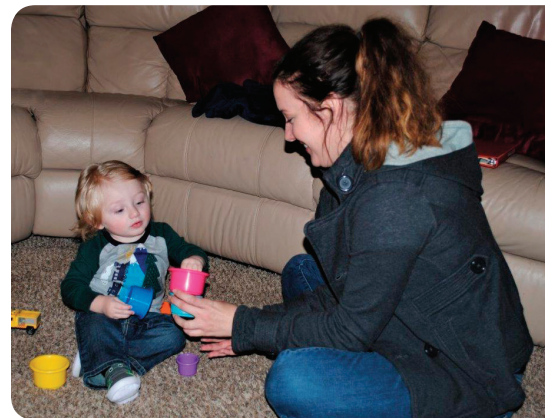
**"He weighed
only 3 pounds,
5 ounces."**

discharged from Lakeland Regional Health (LRH). Due to his prematurity, LRH referred Mason to Achievement Academy's Birth to Three program for ongoing developmental monitoring and support. Early intervention promotes age-appropriate growth and development while supporting

families during the critical early years. Parents are their child's first and most important teacher.

Alison Busby, an Early Interventionist at Achievement Academy, has provided home-based early intervention services to Mason since he was three months old. Mason faced challenges with his development due to positioning limitations from severe acid reflux in infancy. Alison has promoted all areas of his development by providing education and therapeutic techniques.

Alison continues to focus on 15-month-old Mason's gross motor development by using strategies to increase his ability to stand and begin taking steps independently. She also demonstrates to Tiffany ways to increase his fine motor coordination and visual-perceptive skills. Tiffany states, "Alison has done an amazing job of explaining everything about



Alison Busby, Early Interventionist

the Birth to Three program, as well as helping us with different exercises to keep Mason developmentally on track. We are beyond grateful for everything Alison and the Achievement Academy have done and continues to do."

Achievement Academy's Birth to Three program offers free early intervention services to children up to three years of age who may be at-risk for developmental delays to any parent having a concern about their child's development. Our program provides one-on-one early intervention services by a professional in the child's home or natural environment throughout Polk County to 200 children each month.



SPRING 2019

Special Beginnings...Brighter Futures

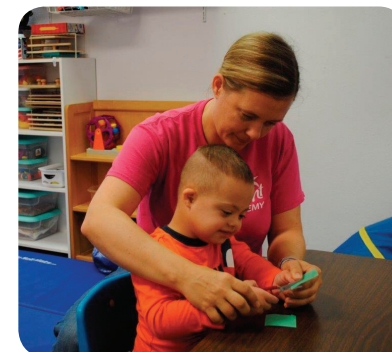
APPLAUSE!

This is Ben.

"Achievement Academy has always been able to find ways to help Ben overcome and develop to his fullest potential."

- Annette, Ben's Mom

Lasting Impressions: Ben's Story



Angela Rosenberg, Occupational Therapist

As a second-time mom, Annette knew how important it was to start breast-feeding as soon as possible. The evening Ben was born; he was struggling to feed and was admitted to the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) where he stayed for 10 days. During this time, Ben was diagnosed as having Down syndrome, a genetic condition that results when there is an extra copy of a specific chromosome, chromosome 21. He also had a hole in his heart, hip displacement and gastrointestinal blockage that was affecting his eating.



Many infants, like Ben, with Down syndrome frequently experience feeding issues throughout infancy and early childhood due to low muscle tone, an enlarged tongue, small facial structure, small oral cavity, narrowed nasal passages, and respiratory and gastrointestinal problems. Low muscle tone affects the strength and range of motion of the facial muscles leading to problems with sucking, swallowing, lip closure, tongue protrusion, chewing, and failure to advance food textures. Children with Down syndrome are also at-risk for swallowing disorders, especially silent aspiration.

Over the next year and a half, Ben had seven major surgeries/procedures: three heart surgeries to repair the hole in his heart, three gastrointestinal surgeries and a blood transfusion.

Ben was enrolled at Achievement Academy at age three. He was non-verbal, underweight, had no social skills and was fed by a gastrostomy tube (G-tube). He began receiving small class instruction, which included personalized goals to help him succeed. He also received one-on-

one individual physical, speech and occupational therapy each week. As a public charter school, these services are offered at no cost to the family.

Ben is now five years old and will be graduating from the Achievement Academy in May. "Ben has come so far in the last three years," said Angela Rosenberg, Occupational Therapist. When he first started at the Achievement Academy, he would only watch during playtime but now he interacts with friends and plays appropriately with toys. His fine motor skills for manipulating small items were strengthened with Occupational Therapy and Ben is now able to use scissors and string beads. His communication skills consisted of using two words at a time to now saying whole sentences.

Pureed food has also been introduced. The collaborative environment of specialized teachers and therapists found uniquely at Achievement Academy has helped Ben reach his developmental milestones and be better prepared to enter Kindergarten next year.

"Achievement Academy has always been able to find ways to help Ben overcome and develop to his fullest potential," Annette said.



and the winner is...

*Thank you to all
of our participants
and supporters.
This would not
have been possible
without you.*



Roger Todd, 97.5 WPCV, presenting award to
Chef Chris Worley

"TOP CHEF OF POLK COUNTY 2019"
Chef Chris Worley
Terrie Lobb Catering, Inc.



**Top Chef of Polk County
Winning Dish**

Lobster Tail Poached in Lemon
Butter with Shaved Fennel
Citrus Salad and Orange Dijon
Vinaigrette.



L to R: Chef Vicente, Chef Worley, Chef Ball

"CHEFS' CHOICE AWARD 2019"

Three way tie:

Chef Jose Vicente,
Brasa Latina

Chef Chris Worley,
Terrie Lobb Catering, Inc.

Chef William Ball,
Cob & Pen

Be sure to check out their amazing
dishes pictured to the left.



"TOP TABLE DÉCOR 2019"
Chef Tim Williams,
Spectra/RP Funding Center



Arancini/Shrimp and Hominy Stuffed
Risotto Balls, Grilled Pineapple, Avocado
Mousse, Coconut Curry Sauce.
Chef William Ball,
Cob & Pen



Black Bean Arancini, Sweet Plantain Puree
with Ropa Vieja Stew, Black Beans & Rice
with Parmesan Cheese and Butter.
Chef Jose Vicente,
Brasa Latina



Matt and Karli Hughes
Parents of a former student.
Karli is also board secretary.



A special thank you to our wonderful
chefs. You were all amazing!



Jason and Alyssa Welling.
Jason is a board member.

Thank you

...to everyone who helped
make our signature event a
success! The Fifth Annual Top
Chef of Polk County event hosted
more than 250 guests who
enjoyed signature dishes (tapas
style) prepared by 11 local chefs.
The net amount raised at this
event was **\$148,000.**

Guests voted on their favorite dish
and Chef Chris Worley from Terrie
Lobb Catering, Inc. was awarded
the title of **"Top Chef of Polk
County 2019."** Guests also voted
on their favorite dining station to
award **"Top Table Décor"** to Chef
Tim Williams from Spectra Food
Services at the RP Funding Center.

In addition, the
participating chefs
voted on their favorite dish
to win **"Chefs' Choice Award
2019."** This vote resulted in a tie
between Chef Jose Vicente from
Brasa Latina, Chef Chris Worley
from Terrie Lobb Catering, Inc.
and Chef William Ball from Cob
& Pen. Chef Chris Worley from
Terrie Lobb Catering, Inc. raised
the most funds for Achievement
Academy through his donated
auction item/s and online voting,
totaling \$3,401 and earned the
"Top Philanthropic Chef" award.
All of the participating chefs raised
a combined total of \$13,393 for
Achievement Academy!

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Smart Title

Save the Date!
February 24, 2020
**"Top Chef of Polk
County"**

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