

**Kelly Lang**  
**Compassionate Allowance Outreach Hearing**  
**Social Security Administration**  
**November 18, 2008**

Good Morning! I am Kelly Lang and I would like to thank you for allowing me to tell you about my family's introduction into the world of pediatric brain injury.

Seven years ago this month I was driving my two daughters to my oldest daughter, Hannah's, Nutcracker rehearsal. The last thing I remember is pulling out of my driveway. I can describe the accident only through witness testimony... We approached a traffic light at an intersection, as the light was turning yellow so I slowed to a stop. At the same time another car hit two others before hitting me from behind and pushing us 60 feet through the intersection until we hit a guardrail.

The first thing I remember is hearing my five year old, Hannah, yelling, "Mommy, Mommy wake up"! The next thing I remember is an EMT asking me if there was anyone sitting in the third row of my minivan. I instantly knew something was wrong with my three year old Olivia. They asked me how old she was and I started screaming at them to do something and that they had to save her. She was sitting directly behind me in a five-point harness car seat.

The three of us were taken in separate ambulances to Loudoun Hospital Center. Immediately after arriving the doctors decided that they could not treat Olivia since their facility was not an equipped trauma center and she was transferred to Fairfax Hospital.

Hannah was discharged with the advice to give her Tylenol if she has any soreness or pain during the night or evening. She went home with a friend.

Olivia was transported to Fairfax while I had a CT scan and X-rays. Upon arriving at Fairfax, Olivia was in the PICU and was not responding to anything. My husband, Michael, arrived immediately after I did. The neurosurgeon informed us that there was bleeding and swelling in Olivia's brain and they put an Intracranial Pressure monitor into her skull. We were told that we should not touch her or try to over stimulate her since the

pressure in her brain was being closely monitored and if the pressure escalated too high she would have to have surgery.

Luckily, the pressure did decrease and the monitor as well as the c-spine was removed after the 8<sup>th</sup> day in the hospital. While my husband and I started looking into in patient rehabilitation facilities Olivia remained in the PICU; she had not opened up her eyes until this point. Olivia was transferred to Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore after two weeks at Fairfax.

Once we arrived at KKI Olivia really began to show improvement. As soon as we arrived in her room and placed her on the bed she rolled over for the first time. Her rehabilitation team originally predicted that Olivia would be in rehab for 3-6 months. She was discharged on Dec. 29, 2001 exactly two weeks after we arrived.

During our stay at KKI we worked with occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech pathologists and recreational therapists. She regained mobility and worked to regain some of her fine motor and speech abilities. Upon discharge we received in home physical therapy for one month. At the end of January, 2 months post-accident Olivia asked when she could go back to preschool. Prior to the accident she attended preschool 2 mornings a week for 3 hours but after she could only go for 2 hours 2 days a week due to fatigue. She was on a wait list for both private speech and occupational therapy. At the same time, we had our Individualized Educational Plan Eligibility hearing and learned she was eligible, no big surprise.

Her services with the public school system began in April 2002 and simultaneously we started private speech therapy 2 times per week in addition to 2 mornings of private preschool, 2 mornings of special education preschool where she also received PT, OT and speech services.

Olivia made great strides through her speech therapy. She continued with private speech services for three years and still receives speech therapy at school. It took a year and a half until we were able to find a private occupational therapist and she remained in therapy for 3 years. She no longer receives occupational therapy through the school system even though her neuropsychological reports have recommended it.

Although Olivia appears to be a normal well-adjusted 10-year-old girl she has significant cognitive difficulties. She has an Individualized Educational

Plan that outlines the services the school system provides such as one on one instruction, extra response time, small group testing, etc. Olivia has also struggled with anxiety since her injury. She is afraid of the dark, balloons, loud noises, and enclosed spaces such as movie theaters. These anxieties have prevented her from participating in many activities over the past 7 years. She also has some social anxieties and at times has trouble communicating with her peers because she is not able to keep up with the conversation or the game that is being played.

Olivia has made many significant gains since the day of our accident seven years ago. In fact, her neurologist has commented that she is a miracle case. When he viewed her MRI he commented that based on the injuries she sustained she should not be walking or talking. We are hopeful that Olivia will continue to improve and be an inspiration to others.

Thank you for allowing me this time to share Olivia's story.