Christmas this year was undoubtably unlike any the Ferguson family could have imagined. During this holiday season, though, the Fergusons were blessed with an amazing Christmas present: Brittney's smile. Connie described her daughter's smile as the "biggest and best smile I have ever seen her have."

During this special occasion the Fergusons entertained many family members at Craig Hospital in Englewood, where Brittney has been staying.

Cousins, aunts and uncles shared Christmas with Brittney and her family this year. Brittney was able to stay for about 30 minutes before she became overstimulated. The time they shared, short as it was, was a happy time.

Connie noted Brittney's been able to make a few trips to the family's apartment, including Christmas, New Year's Eve and on weekends.

Family was also present for the happy moment when Brittney smiled on Dec. 30. In fact, it was Brittney's aunt Cindy that gave rise to that encouraging smile. To top it all off, Cindy even got a laugh out of her, "and not just one," said Connie, "but several." Brittney and her family were all laughing together, and Connie described it as "truly a heartwarming feeling."

At this point in her therapy, Brittney can't speak yet, so it's her laughter and the smile on her face and in her eyes that bring hope. Other remarkable steps in her progress were equally encouraging during Christmas and the start of this new year.

Christmas Day marked 3 months since the accident that changed Brittney and her family's lives. Those three months have been fraught with hard work on her therapy and progress that Connie excitedly shared in her Dec. 30 update.

"Britt continues to amaze us and progress slowly.

"She still has her c-diff and now she has a urinary tract infection that is resistant to the antibiotics that they are giving for her c-diff. So now she is on four antibiotics that require her tube feedings to be off. Trying to work her therapies around that and such is going to be a little complicated, but I think it will be ok to handle.

"In the past few weeks she has been sitting on the edge of the mats and on the edge of her bed and is balancing pretty well. She isn't talking and on some days she does a lot of crying. She has been getting leg cramps so that makes her quite uncomfortable at times.

"We thought we had a break through on a way to communicate with a buzzer that she could push with a finger. She did great one day and answered 12-15 questions all correctly. Then since she gets too excited and grabs it, we can't get her to push the button.

"She is really moving and she has figured out how to maneuver the connections on her tube feed. Today was her second time she disconnected it and filled her bed with formula.

"She had her barium swallow test today and she passed on thicker liquids such as honey thickness, puree, nectar. On the thin liquids, some escaped her and went into her airway. So she isn't cleared on thins, semisolids or solids yet.

"Her tongue isn't working quite right so there is a delay on getting food manipulated from the front of her mouth to the back of her mouth. She also still has a hard time opening her mouth, so a lot of times the therapist has to use a syringe to squirt the food into her mouth.

"They are starting her eating on a 'therapeutic' level. Because her attention span is so short and she takes a long time to eat things and her ability to eat normally isn't there yet, they don't want to take away her tube feedings yet.

"Today was probably her best day in a while. She was more calm than usual and she did such fantastic things today. She actually was kneeling on the mat mostly by herself and held herself there! She worked very hard today and did totally amazing.

“She did some picture matching game and did that well. She sat on the mat holding herself up for 15 minutes or more without her feet on the floor, silly girl. She is going to have abs of steel soon! But the ultimate highlight of today was she smiled!”