

## **Brittney Ferguson continues to improve, gets out and about**

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

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After months spent in various hospitals, Brittney Ferguson's return to home in March has certainly been a relief. For both her and her family, the last few months have been spent taking steps getting adjusted to changes in their lives and getting Brittney better.

Brittney's progress in her time at home has been steady, her family often finding new and improved things she is capable of doing. One thing that has been especially helpful, noted her mother Connie, is they are finally on a consistent schedule.

Part of that schedule is Brittney's therapy, which Connie says is going well. She added Brittney has been working very hard whenever she has therapy sessions. Despite the progress she has made, Brittney is still not talking and is still being fed through a tube. It is evident, however, that she's still moving forward.

Where she can't speak, Brittney communicates by other means. "The sign language," said Connie, "is progressing slowly. She seems to get confused between signs." The solution to that problem, she added, is phrasing questions in a way she can answer 'yes' or 'no.'

As far as eating goes, Brittney continues to eat on a therapeutic level, but gets her sustenance by the feeding tube. When she joins friends out for lunch, however, Brittney joins in, sharing with her sister Amanda or enjoying an ice cream or a drink of her own.

Connie noted, "One sign of progression on cognitive function is being able to respond appropriately without being prompted." This is one area in which Brittney is clearly making progress, as she initiates a wave to people when they say hello.

Acknowledging Brittney's recovery is a work in progress, Connie said the family is working on allowing Brittney time to respond without prompting her. "Sometimes we forget she does have a delay in processing time and prompt her when she probably wouldn't need to be."

On the physical end of her progress, Brittney continues to gain strength in her right leg, but

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doesn't like to put a lot of weight on it. The family is in the process of getting a standing frame and a gaited walker so Brittney can stand more often and gain strength and confidence in her walking.

Brittney and her family have also been spending a lot of time at the pool. It seems to be an activity she really enjoys, and Connie said she sees improvement every time they go. "We have her strapped with every flotation device we can find when we go," she said.

They are definitely thankful there is a lift chair to get Brittney in and out and the pool is an option for her. As Brittney continues to improve and grows more comfortable, she's been wanting to go outside more often. While it wipes her out when it's very hot out, it's nice to go out there when they can.

One perk of Brittney's improvement is the advantage of getting out and about. Whether it's at the pool or the movies, Brittney's been seeing a lot of people around town. Connie mentioned if anyone sees them around town, they shouldn't hesitate to say hi. "She may not respond much, but I do think Brittney enjoys seeing people she knows!"

Connie went on to say, "We thank you for your continued support and prayers, we appreciate them very much. I don't know how we could have come this far without them."