

Name: Sophia Kim

Date of Birth: December 19, 2013 (11 years old)

Parents: Jin Kim & Jiwon Kong

Address: 3417 Orange Grove Ct, Ellicott City, MD 21043

Parent Contact Information:

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Diagnosis: Developmental delay, congenital cytomegalovirus infection, congenital malformations of the brain, epilepsy, microcephaly, dysphagia (difficulty swallowing), polymicrogyria, lissencephaly, cerebral palsy

Sophia's Journey & Medical Challenges

Sophia was born as a **twin** and, at **10 months old (September 24, 2014)**, was **diagnosed with congenital brain malformations** at Children's Hospital in DC. Doctors warned that she might face **severe challenges in vision, speech, motor skills, and mobility**, but as her parents, we were determined to give her every opportunity to improve.

With **the support of Medicaid**, Sophia receives **physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy two to three times per week**, helping her make **slow but steady progress**—just like a **turtle taking small but determined steps forward**.

Essential Medical & Assistive Devices

As Sophia grows, her **need for medical equipment increases**, allowing her to attend school and engage in daily activities:

- **Walker & Wheelchair** – Required for mobility and independence.
 - **AFO Shoes (Ankle-Foot Orthotics)** – Essential for stability and walking support.
 - **LISS-funded iPad** – Helps facilitate communication as she is **non-verbal**, improving her ability to express her needs.
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Breakthroughs & Rehabilitation

Three years ago, Sophia **dislocated her hip** due to **her inability to walk**, requiring major surgeries on her **hip joint, Achilles tendon, arch, and hamstrings**.

After extensive rehabilitation, she can now take **20-30 independent steps**—a **miraculous milestone** considering her medical condition. Though she will **always require AFO shoes and support**, this progress is a testament to **how critical ongoing therapy and medical interventions are** for her future.

Daily Care & Supervision Needs

Sophia **requires 24/7 assistance** for basic daily living tasks:

- **Eating:** She **cannot eat independently** and is at risk of choking, requiring **constant supervision** at home and school.
- **Toileting:** Needs full assistance for restroom use.
- **Hygiene:** Requires help with **washing hands, dressing, and bathing**.
- **Mobility:** Needs assistance for **moving around the house safely**.

Through **Medicaid-funded caregiver services**, Sophia's **quality of life and family stability have improved**, ensuring she receives the **constant care and supervision she needs**.

Why Continued Funding is Critical

Sophia's condition is **lifelong**, but with continued **therapy, medical care, and support services**, we can:

- **Slow down regression** and help her maintain her abilities.
- **Improve her chances for greater independence as an adult**.
- **Provide essential supervision** to prevent dangerous incidents like choking or falls.

Without these critical services, **her progress will halt, and she risks severe regression**, making future independence impossible.

Call to Action

To ensure Sophia's continued **care, development, and safety**, we urge legislators to:

1. **Protect and prioritize funding for Medicaid and disability services.**
2. **Maintain or increase therapy services** to prevent functional decline.
3. **Ensure continued access to caregiver services**, allowing family members to provide full-time care.
4. **Support assistive technology funding** (such as LISS iPads) for **non-verbal individuals**.