

Know Me



NAME

Calliope

PASSION

*Singing and
Dancing*

My Story

Hi! I am Calliope and I am 7 years old. My family lives in Massillon and I attend school at Stark DD's RS Southgate School. I was diagnosed with Phelan-McDermid Syndrome when I was 2 years old and Autism at age 7. I am a fighter and I am strong. I can do a lot and am learning more all the time.

According to Jennifer, Calliope's mom, she has surpassed many obstacles in her life. In relation to her diagnosis, Calliope has endured more than 12 eye surgeries and does not have a lens in one eye. Through it all mom says "she still has a smile on her face. She has the silliest personality, very intelligent, and is always singing along to Frozen or Moana movies."

Calliope has gotten services from Stark DD since she was a toddler, beginning with support in speech, occupational and physical therapy from Stark County Early Intervention. She continued getting help attending preschool at Stark DD's Eastgate Early Childhood and Family Center.

Eastgate Preschool Director Tammy Maney described the tremendous gains Calliope made in gross motor skills during her preschool years. "When Calliope and her mom came to visit our preschool, she wasn't walking. She used to hop on her knees," said Maney. "By the time preschool started in the fall, she was beginning to walk." Today, her teachers describe that she moves from one place to another "with exuberance and speed."

Now Calliope attends RS Southgate School. Her teacher, Vanessa Kusler, says Calliope is a sweet, loving, feisty, strong-willed little girl. She loves to show off her shoes, shirt, & pants upon arrival. "Lately she has enjoyed going around the classroom to say "hi" to each of the staff. Once she is finished with staff she will make her way to each of the students, even the ones she likes to fuss at during the school day. What touched my heart last year was when I say her down on her knees very close to a schoolmate with vision issues, during recess, a ball he was playing with that had gotten away from him. She was very loving and kind during her interaction with him."

Kusler says Calliope is the queen of the classroom and she enjoys outside play and walks on the track (when weather permits). She also enjoys bubbles, looking at books, working puzzles, and interacting with the I-Pad.

continued



YouTube

Academically, Calliope has blossomed into a great student: naming her colors, numbers 1-12, months of the year, seasons, and answering “wh” questions either verbally, using picture icons, or her new communication device during group sessions.

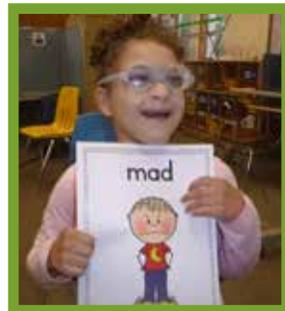
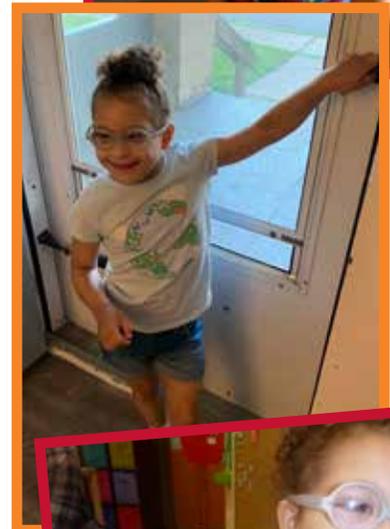
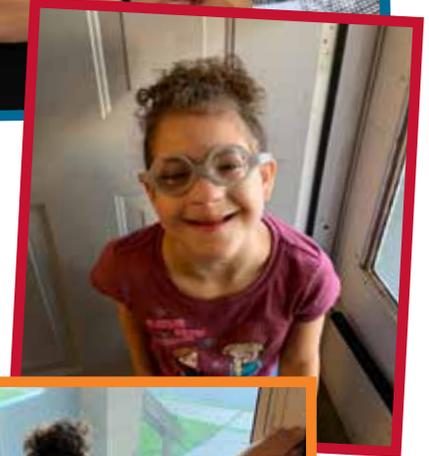
Calliope works with RS Southgate School speech therapy to expand her communication skills. Speech therapist Tina Gilbert says Calliope is a high spirited, fun, outgoing little girl. “She has so much she wants to tell you and to show you. She is quite the fashionista and can’t wait to show you her outfit and her shoes, especially if they are pink! Calliope can be described as a well dressed female version of the Flash.”

“Calliope is a very smart little girl and sucks up knowledge like a sponge. She recently received a communication device to supplement her emerging speech skills and is working very hard learning how to use all of these new vocabulary words,” said Gilbert. “She loves to interact and play with others and can often be heard cheering on her fellow classmates. Calliope is known to everyone at Southgate. She may be little in stature, but she is big in personality!”

Calliope is also making strides in fine motor skills. Stark DD Occupational Therapist Jenna Beck says during her OT therapy sessions Calliope has been working tracing her name and letters of the alphabet. “I’ve loved seeing her grow from only wanting to scribble when I handed to her a marker, to now tracing letters, as well as saying each letter as she traces it! She’s proud of the work that she does and loves to share it with her teachers and classmates.”

In addition to attending RS Southgate School, Calliope and her family get support through Stark DD’s Service and Support Department. “I have helped Jennifer locate day cares that will take Calliope and accessing Family Support Service (FSS) dollars,” said Stark DD SSA Cristina Barker.

“Stark DD has helped Calliope throughout her whole life with occupational, speech, and physical therapies and we are so grateful for them to be a part of our lives. We cannot wait to see what new goal she will crush next,” said mom, Jennifer.



Know Stark DD



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Developmental Disabilities**

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