



Dear Family and Friends of Mark Petchey,

It is hard to believe that almost half of Mark's life has been wheelchair bound. Although he cannot speak or walk he is still in good spirits. He prefers fish for dinner, likes artichokes and he responds to some witty news commentaries.

We started borrowing library audio books including Shakespeare and Sci-Fi novels. However what he really likes are mathematics and physics. If you have some advice on this please let me know. As I did not go through school in an English speaking environment, I have no feel for this and what I have found so far is either too easy or too difficult.

Recently, Mark's therapist, Letha, found an article about a successful computer/communication access by a stroke patient. This system was developed by Dr. Sellars and a team at Tennessee State University in Nashville. I jumped on to e-mail and started communicating with Dr. Sellars. He thinks that this particular system may not be useful for Mark but he is helping me to connect with other alternative systems being developed at other institutions. I am hoping his communication issue will be our next big project for the coming year.

Meanwhile Mark has a good year round with exercise and corrective intervention with a hand specialist to prevent the loss of ability to open his hands and move his arms. That started with Botox injection to his right arm by Dr. Vidaurri at Kaiser (socialized medicine) physiatrist (rehabilitation doctor) in June and he referred Mark to the hand specialist division. This highly skilled professional, who happens to be a Japanese American lady, made several hand splints to improve and preserve his ability to open his hands after Botox became effective. We use these splints daily in conjunction with other methods developed by Letha, Mark's private therapist. She taught us to clasp his fingers when he is in the wheelchair. This way his hands will train his brain to learn the correct position. Mark is, as a handicapped adult, covered by government's disability insurance and I was really impressed that they provided this cycle of treatments.





Letha provided her private therapy throughout the year. Meanwhile she had her own difficulties trying to locate adaptive footwear for her injured knees and feet. Her search took her all the way to Israel. I could not believe that she actually flew into the pretty tense war zone. She is the key person to direct our team work and has been instrumental in guiding all his school assistants and home caregivers. She has educated all including new comers into Mark's world.

His Mom, Hideko had to leave her long time associated Healdsburg District Hospital after 10 years. That was because she had to commute several times to Japan as her father passed away in March at the age of 94. He was well until the last minute when his other daughter put him to bed. That was most enviable departure to by any standards. Now Hideko is trying to get a new job in this vicinity. Wish her luck in contending with this tight job market.

Meanwhile, she is active with English and Scottish dancing and, most recently learning Tai Chi and Qigong as well as taking soprano recorder practice.
This is why she can't finish knitting a vest!

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