

Dear Family and Friends of Mark Petchey,

It's the time for greeting and gathering. How have you been and what are your holiday plans? Children must be growing quickly and we are slowly getting older. Mark has been well throughout the year. I only contacted his doctor when he had a sudden unexpected fever in October for 1-2 days. I keep his doctor updated on his condition daily through the medical website portal. She is very supportive.



Meanwhile there came a big change. Grahame finally left the house. He has been with us for the last 8 years after our divorce. He had been staying in the master bedroom, but lately his health had declined to the point it was unsafe for me to leave him upstairs. He first moved into an assisted living facility in Sonoma County, but now he resides at a convalescent/recovery hospital in Oakland/East Bay. Here is some of his photo taken in September when we visited him. He was alert and immediately acknowledged Mark. Last visit was this weekend on November 27. He looked well. According to him, he gained 7-8 pounds now weighing 138lb! I saw his lunch plate empty. Another surprise. When we visited him in October in an acute hospital, he looked so poorly and did not even touch his lunch. He has ups and downs but overall, he is doing well. Mark really enjoys spending time with his dad and so does Grahame.

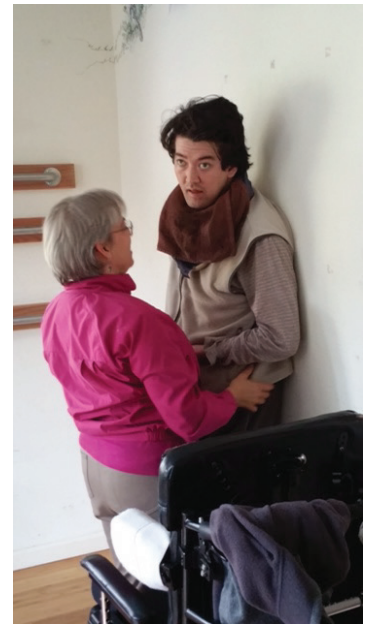


While most of the year was rather quiet in Mark's life, he remained diligent in his exercises. Unfortunately, the standing frame he uses to assist him in his exercises collapsed. We called for repair but the model is no longer manufactured and even the parts are now unavailable. This is a piece of equipment critical to help him practice keeping his feet straight, as well as helping with muscle tone and physical strength. According to his physician, he should practice for about 15-20 minutes a day, Mark usually can stand for 15-30 minutes. So this year he will be excited to see a new present on its way.

The medical team is also offering him a new wheelchair. We are excited to meet with the wheelchair evaluator next week. His old one was requiring a lot more repair and attention, it was in desperate need of replacement.

Throughout this year and part last year, Mark was evaluated for a speech device, too. The North Bay Regional Center referred us to a speech pathologist team in Sacramento. We have visited their office a number of times, as well as them visiting Mark at our home and his day school. After much work and evaluation, they are recommending to Kaiser that his medical insurance should acquire one of these speech machines for him, but we have not heard the final decision so far. So, he is getting a lot of presents this year.





Letha has been the flag ship for Mark's exercise and therapy program at school as well as at home. She educates all new and old teachers/assistants before they work with him. I request that everyone receives her training session at least once. She visited Mark recently at home when his school was closed after the Thanksgiving Holiday. She made Mark stand on the wall as well as walking with his caregiver. Mark responds to her very well.

Here is the comments from Letha:

Mark is enthusiastic and working well with his occupational therapist, Letha Marchetti. He is building on his ability to stand with more control of his legs. We had one stand that lasted about five minutes. Mark is about six feet five inches tall. So he is working to regain control over has a lot of length in his mid- section.

Mark is working on this in standing, sitting and even lying down. It is one of the biggest jobs in his life. The good people at Becoming Independent and his great home help staff are all supporting this in both little and big ways.

Here's to another great year of progress for Mark!

During this year, we have seen a noticeable change in Mark, his face just lights up now. He is more alert and we have seen the "Markness" coming out again. I wish you could have seen his quiet smile from ear to ear when he heard on the morning news radio that Bob Dylan received the Nobel literature award. He had been so fond of Dylan since his childhood and that made his day.



Our holidays will be peaceful and quiet. We need such time to enjoy the beauty of chilly days, gray sky and rain. When there comes a break in the weather, he enjoys the birds that visit the feeders outside his windows.

Best wishes to you.

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