

## Dear Family and Friends of Mark Petchey,

The Holiday Season comes, and we begin getting all the updates from family and friends. Babies are no longer babies but now are toddlers heading to school. How did it happen??? This was my opening from last year's message.

This year, however, there came more. Not only have kids grown, but adults have passed on. Mark's father, Grahame, departed at last after a few years of long term hospital stay. That was in February and was followed by his care provider, Allan, passing in April. Those were really unexpected. Then, we lost Margaret Peterson in September who had a brain injured son, Hugh, in West Sonoma County. She was our soul mate in advocating for brain injured patients. She was one of the first friends who introduced us to every resource found in the brain injury network. I lost several other friends during this year including my cousin, my taichi teacher, Emilio, long time dance friends and local friends. Yes, this has been a very sad year.

Meanwhile Mark's caregiver, Dillon, and his wife, Gabriella, had their first child. Life just goes on – some go and some come. DNA never dies. Just like the end of The Prophet by Kalil Gibran – “A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind, and another woman shall bear me.”



*Now we are adding more mobility in his developmental sequence. Crawling is the next big challenge. Today, Mark was able to advance his right arm, while lying on his stomach, for the first time, by himself.*

A change came in Mark's daily schedule which is the location of Mark's exercise with Letha. Because of this, I have been able to witness her methods in working with Mark. At different times, she is holistic, psychic, practical, pragmatic, and scientific. She is open minded in understanding him and communicating with him. Mark expresses his overwhelming feeling with bearing weight on the table as well as standing against the wall. It is hard and exhausting for him, and he is often puffing and huffing like a big bad wolf.

Meanwhile Mark is strong, happy, and in a good health. His doctor recommends that his weight be less than 200 lbs, and that means he needs a balanced diet. It is my responsibility to provide an interesting variety of foods. He sleeps quietly throughout the night which saves my life. Until Mark's body is chiseled to below 200 lbs, I must keep making hard effort to provide an appropriate diet.

At his day school, the class/group he belongs to has changed. This class now sends the fellow students to outside activities. Some work at the cafeteria in the Smart-Train going the sixty miles to San

Francisco from Sonoma County. Others work at a nearby cafeteria at Kaiser Hospital. The school is aiming to have disabled people interact with the community. Mark's limitation in his ability to speak and move his hands do not leave many choices, but I fundamentally like the school's approach in giving opportunities to those who are normally believed disabled.

At this moment, Mark has a wonderful Saturday helper – a young man in his 20's named Dylan who provides Mark with the opportunity to go out to the beach, to movies, or have a big lunch somewhere. He also assists Mark with standing exercise and stretching. Meanwhile Mark's old time helper, Dillon, also in his 20's, covers every Thursday evening giving me freedom. His weekday after school slot has been covered by a Tibetan,



*Mark has developed his ability to prop himself up, roll and come to sitting over the last few years.*

Dhondup, for years. Mark has one more regular helper on Mondays when I attend Scottish dancing. This is Penpa who is also excellent. She is the key person who looks over the food supplies and makes up for the chores missed by others during my absence.

Mark is supported by very long term, dedicated people, and that is really invaluable.

Mark and I are very fortunate to have this big support team helping us in our daily lives. We are also grateful for the kindness and support given to us by all our friends. Very best wishes to all of you.



Hideko Oga Petchey  
512 Norlee Street, Sebastopol CA, 95448 USA  
Cell: 707-481-7531  
hideko@sonic.net