

In the midst of graduate school stress, I am reminded of my

## “W H Y ”

The journey to my Doctorate of Audiology degree has been one full of learning experiences. With each passing semester and through the help of dedicated professors and clinical supervisors, I have become more prepared and inspired for my future as an Audiologist. However, what I did not know at the beginning of my graduate school career is that some of my most valuable lessons would come from outside of the course curriculum. During my second year of school, I began searching for potential nanny positions. Within a couple days I was in communication with a mother, Stacey\*, who was seeking care for her 8-month old daughter. After interviewing with the family I learned that the daughter was born with bilateral severe-profound hearing loss. I knew that this was the perfect position for me and was eager to begin caring for Sarah. When I first began working her family, they had just started learning about cochlear implants and how the devices could help Sarah. It was eye-opening for me to see their discussions and questions evolve with each passing day. I distinctly remember walking in one day to find Stacey at the dining room table buried in different brochures and reading materials from the leading cochlear implant companies. This was only the beginning of a long journey ahead. When Sarah's parents decided to move forward with the process they were sent home with a lengthy pre-surgery checklist. Every day following was filled with scheduling appointments and coordinating care. I am grateful I was able to be a part of the beginning stages in Sarah's journey to hearing because the process opened my eyes to all that goes on beyond the walls of the audiologist's office. As a clinician, it can be easy to overlook what goes into the decision to move forward with cochlear implants, all the discussion, the research, the questions, the anxiety and beyond. And this was merely the beginning. Now, nine months later, Sarah is doing wonderful with her cochlear implant. She is hearing new sounds every day and her expressive/receptive vocabulary is expanding rapidly. Each week audiologist/auditory verbal therapist speaks highly of her progress, but I know she does so fully knowing all of the work Sarah's parents have dedicated to her advancement. I am so grateful for the opportunity to work with Sarah. She has open my eyes to the triumphs and trials of childhood hearing loss. I have watched her world change before my eyes and I know her dedicated audiologists have played a large part in this. She continuously reminds me of my **“why”**.



\*Names changed for privacy

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