



The Still Place
FOR FAMILIES WITH
SERIOUSLY ILL CHILDREN

Memorial Day May Newsletter 2021



(in this picture Baby Adrian is still in the oven)

Special thanks and prayers on this Memorial Day Weekend for this Daddy, who left his wife, newborn baby and Isaac a few weeks ago to serve our country on a difficult tour of duty. Watching Mike and Beth's very current sacrifice makes me even more appreciative of all the service men and women who have gone before, sacrificing their own family, joy and lives to keep all Americans safe. Mike also shared stories with me about how much our military services do around the world in times of crisis whenever and wherever it arises. May we all pause and be proud of our service men and women, remembering their families and those who have served so bravely throughout our great country's history.

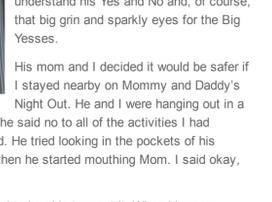
The Still Place core value I am exploring this month is Empowerment. Our core value states, "We encourage empowerment through experiences that create victors despite serious life-altering illness."

This morning, knowing I was behind on getting this newsletter out before the end of May, I picked up my phone and computer and they were both out of power. I thought, you know I am feeling about the same way, running in the red zone about to lose power. As I was plugging in my devices, I thought, I wish I could just plug into something and power up. A few hours later after playing a little and saying good-bye to our two Still Place Families, I realize wow my energy is great again. (Picture is of my little buddy dumping me out of our power chair using the remote while I was trying to take a selfie of us! Read on to learn more from this little victor!)



These families (and a little mascara) power me up! As I explore empowerment, I ask you to take a moment to consider what powers you up and what depletes your power?

My teachers this week have been two powerful 8 year olds, Timothy and Lakshmi, their siblings and parents. Empowerment is about becoming stronger, more confident and taking your own power back gracefully. In the past, when I think of empowerment for myself, I have harbored a hint of aggression, a lot of bossiness alongside a tinge of anger, but my tiny teachers have shown me a better way. They taught me there is a way to be graceful and kind in being confident and clear in getting what you need whether it be through asking or getting it yourself.



Timothy breathes through a tracheostomy which is a tube that fits in a hole in the front of his neck. Sometimes it is hard to understand his words if he is tired or frustrated. I was starting to learn to understand him and ask him before I pushed his chair, offered food or engaged him in an activity

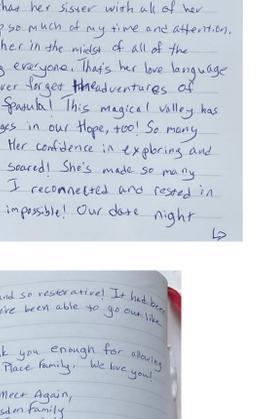
He was so self-confident rolling his little chair across the road by himself as traffic waited. He was so clear when his mother asked a question and responded accordingly with her response, even if it was no 15 times in a row. I noticed there was eventually a yes. I adopted the same and through the week became delighted to understand his Yes and No and, of course, that big grin and sparkly eyes for the Big Yesses.

His mom and I decided it would be safer if I stayed nearby on Mommy and Daddy's Night Out. He and I were hanging out in a

room by ourselves at The Copper Door, when he said no to all of the activities I had brought. We were both feeling a little frustrated. He tried looking in the pockets of his suction machine, he tossed a few things and then he started mouthing Mom. I said okay, let me have someone go get your mom.

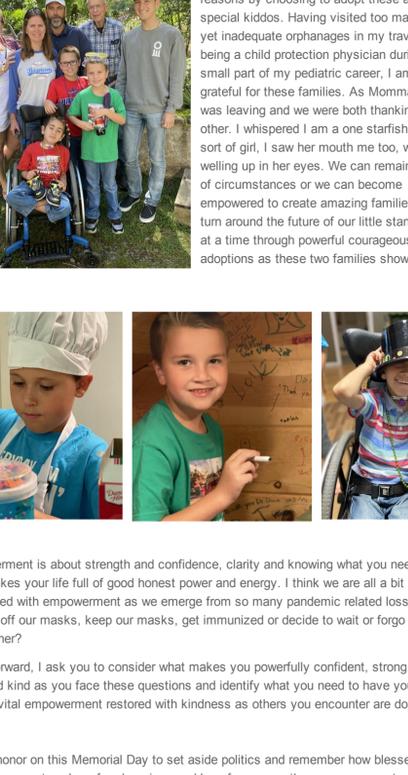
It was so rewarding to me to know his need and to be able to meet it. When his mom arrived we realized he was trying to tell me he was hungry. When I looked at him and said, "Dr. Dawn is such a goof-head for not understanding you," he laughed in a way that made me feel so good about feeling like an idiot. Later, I asked him again if he wanted to blow bubbles, this time, he said yes. He had not been able to do this consistently before because it takes such a big breath. This time he was super successful time after time. I realized again sometimes the simplest moments are the most empowering.

Lakshmi, my other teacher, was adopted from India. She lost her vision as a baby from untreated glaucoma. She can't remember color. Despite this, she taught me a wonderful thing about color. All week she would ask me what color I was. I would say, I am sunshine yellow or happy green or pleased purple or angry red, or grey tired. It was a great way for us to check in with her and one another in a gentle grace filled way empowering us all to have more fun



We got us all playing and imagining with her. She asked about our stories of "recliners and back support" which she loved. She nicknamed Miss Heather, Jacuzzi and had Maryanne and Braeton playing hospital in the recliner with her deep into the night.

Her mom said it best in this note she left us.



The parents of these families demonstrate an incredible type of empowerment in creating families where there were none for various reasons by choosing to adopt these amazing special kiddos. Having visited too many loving yet inadequate orphanages in my travels and being a child protection physician during a small part of my pediatric career, I am so grateful for these families. As Momma Dani was leaving and we were both thanking each other. I whispered I am one starfish at a time sort of girl. I saw her mouth me too, with tears welling up in her eyes. We can remain victims of circumstances or we can become empowered to create amazing families and turn around the future of our little starfish, one at a time through powerful courageous adoptions as these two families show us.



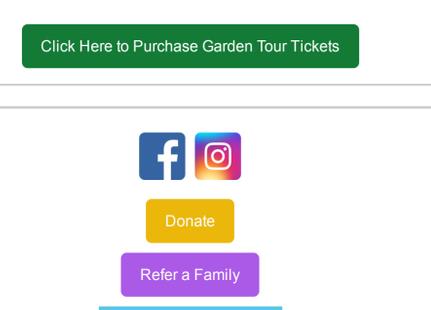
Empowerment is about strength and confidence, clarity and knowing what you need and what makes your life full of good honest power and energy. I think we are all a bit challenged with empowerment as we emerge from so many pandemic related losses. Do we take off our masks, keep our masks, get immunized or decide to wait or forgo the shot all together?

Going forward, I ask you to consider what makes you powerfully confident, strong, grace filled and kind as you face these questions and identify what you need to have your unique, vital empowerment restored with kindness as others you encounter are doing the same.

It is an honor on this Memorial Day to set aside politics and remember how blessed we are to live in a country where freedom rings and love for one another empowers us to serve others.



Welcome our Summer Interns Maryanne and Braeton



The Happy Couple Gnorman and Gnorma

Thank you for all the generous gifts and donations!

Click here to get the newlyweds off to a good start with a monthly donation of \$10 to help with their rent.

Amazon Gift registry



Save the Date: Saturday, July 3, 2021 Gardens of Hope Garden Tour

Seven unique gardens to inspire, refreshments, garden goodies, door prizes, plants and TSP merch. All to support families with seriously ill children.

Please contact Heather at info@thestillplace.org if you might be able to help us in anyway contact us by clicking the button below if you are new to The Still Place.

Tickets available now by clicking the button below. \$20 Advance. \$25 Day of the Event.

Click Here to Purchase Garden Tour Tickets

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