

COLOMBIA

Caregiver Name: Tatiana
Age at Implantation: 2

Child: Juanita
Age Today: 16

When we received my daughter Juanita's diagnosis, I felt as though my entire world had fallen into silence. **If I were asked what the greatest challenge of my life has been, without hesitation I would say this: accepting her hearing loss** and facing the uncertainty of not knowing whether she would ever hear my voice or be able to integrate into society in the same way as other hearing children.

However, I later realized that I was mistaken. She did not integrate in the same way, she did so in her own way, a better one, with the tools that over the years, I learned to provide her. Fear of the future and the hope for a different outcome were constant shadows during those days, as I struggled to process a reality, I was not ready to accept.



I must acknowledge that throughout this journey, I was never alone. **My greatest source of support has been my family; their strength kept me standing** when I no longer had my own. **In addition, a team of dedicated professionals and other parents who had already walked this path became my guides.** Together, we formed a network where listening to the experiences of others provided the support I needed to move forward.

Today, as I look back, I am deeply moved by my daughter's growth. **Her greatest achievement to date has not only been the moment her cochlear implant was activated and she discovered sound, but also her remarkable ability to communicate and learn another language, her confidence in speaking, and the way she has excelled academically and in sports.** Every word she speaks is a small victory; one we celebrate as if it were a world championship.

My advice to other parents walking this path is a reflection I would share with my younger self from fourteen years ago, when I was just beginning this journey. Now, all I can say is **patience to wait through each stage and perseverance to never give up will be your greatest tools. The journey is not linear; there will be difficult days, but we made the best decision of our lives when we chose to embark on this emotional roller coaster.** The adaptability of children is truly remarkable. Trust the process, trust in your child, and above all, never stop nurturing and encouraging them; this will be key throughout their entire life.

Finally, my struggle has not remained confined to our home. **I have come to understand that for my daughter to thrive, the world around her must also change.** To help bring about these changes, **I have joined parent associations to raise awareness about hearing loss** and have studied it from multiple perspectives, seeking ways to support my daughter and other children in developing communication skills. My focus is on helping

the world understand the lives of people with hearing loss. It may sound ambitious, but from my perspective, if we help everyone understand hearing loss, we can build a more inclusive society and, consequently, ensure proper access to hearing support.

My dream is that no child should be left in silence due to a lack of resources, political support, or awareness. I have dedicated much of my journey to volunteering, sharing my daughter's story to help others understand this reality and to offer them the reassurance that with purpose and dedication, success is possible.

Likewise, through my professional roles in various companies, I have actively helped more families gain access to cochlear implants and hearing aids, transforming my personal experience into a driving force for positive change for others.

