

PARAGUAY

Caregiver name: Mario
Age at Implantation: 2

Child: Dulce Valentina
Age Today: 5

My name is Mario and my little girl is Valentina. She is five and a half years old today. When Valentina was born, everything seemed normal. However, when she was about eight months old, we began to notice that she was barely responding to sounds. After a series of audiological tests, we were finally told that she had bilateral profound hearing loss.

Here in Paraguay, where the healthcare system often falls short, we found ourselves completely overwhelmed. We had no prior experience with this situation, nor did we know anyone who had gone through something similar. Emotionally and mentally, we felt crushed. It was an incredibly difficult moment for our family.



Then, something happened that we can only describe as destiny—or perhaps a miracle. **During one of the audiology appointments, we met a woman whose name we never learned, something I still regret to this day. That woman told my wife about a hearing loss organization in Paraguay and about an extraordinary speech therapist.**

We reached out to her, and in less than three months, we already gotten approval for a cochlear implant in Valentina's right ear. It truly felt like a miracle. **The surgery was performed, the processor was activated, and Valentina began to hear. She really began to hear.**

However, despite consistent speech therapy and our constant efforts, Valentina has not yet been able to form sentences or speak fluently. Because of this, we began pursuing the possibility of a second cochlear implant through a legal protection order. We won the court ruling, but to this day, we have received no response.

To make matters more difficult, the implant Valentina currently uses is now outdated. Technology continues to advance rapidly, and there will come a time when this device will no longer function properly. Unfortunately, we do not have the means to maintain or replace it on our own in the long term.

That is why we are currently organizing activities and seeking support to obtain a newer cochlear implant processor—one that can truly serve her for many years to come. In the meantime, we continue with her speech therapy sessions without missing a single appointment. At home, my wife, my other daughter, and I all do everything we possibly can. While they focus on her daily support and stimulation, I do my best to keep moving forward financially in order to find a solution for our daughter.

This is our story with Valentina. She is pure love—a beautiful little girl who has stolen the hearts of everyone who meets her. Many people



see her as a symbol of sacrifice, perseverance, and strength in the fight against deafness. She carries it all with remarkable grace.

Of course, what we want most is for her to have a life that is as close to normal as possible. We may not reach absolute normality, but we truly believe that we can—and that we will—give her the best life possible.

Thank you very much for reading our story.