COCHLEAR IMPLANT INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF ACTION. AISBL
BE0798.221.710

INDONESIA

Caregiver Name: Tita
Age at Implantation: 2

Child: Mikayla
Age Today: 7

In 2020, my world suddenly became quiet. Mikayla was two years and two months old when we received the diagnosis: severe hearing loss, 100/90 decibels in both ears. Those numbers were more than medical terms to me. They felt like a wall standing between my little girl and the sounds of laughter, music, and even her mother's voice.

December 2020 marked the first major step in our journey. Mikayla underwent her first cochlear implant surgery on her right ear. Hope grew slowly, but the process was far from easy. At home, I became more than just a parent—I was also her teacher, therapist, and protector. Each day came with small goals that felt enormous. Teaching Mika to understand simple instructions often felt like climbing a steep mountain. **Anxiety was constant: the high cost of the device, therapy expenses that were not covered by government support, and the feeling of isolation when Mika struggled to interact with children her age.** The stress was real. Yet, in the middle of it all, kindness found its way to us. **Family, friends who helped financially, patient therapists, and a community of parents became my support system when I felt close to giving up.**

Mika grew up with one "magic ear." Her speech improved, but new challenges appeared, especially in noisy environments. Too many sounds made it harder for her to focus. At first, we hesitated to take the next step. Then the decision came from Mika herself. She asked for surgery on her left ear. She no longer wanted to use a hearing aid on that side because, to her, the sound was "noisy" and unclear. In December 2024, Mika entered the operating room for the second time. She was finding balance in her world. The results were beyond our expectations. Her confidence grew rapidly. Her speech became clear and natural, without the need for sign language or lip reading. In crowded places, she was no longer lost in sound—she could follow conversations easily.

Today, what once felt like an impossible dream has become reality. Mikayla attends a mainstream school, learning and playing alongside her peers. Most importantly, she is never ashamed. When classmates ask about the device on her head, she explains it proudly and with confidence. She has grown from a toddler surrounded by silence into a cheerful and caring child. Often, she encourages other children who are just starting to use hearing devices. With bright eyes and a sincere smile, she says, "Keep practicing. Don't give up."

Through this journey, I want to share this with every parent walking a similar path: do not be afraid to ask for help. We were never meant to carry this burden alone. Hearing loss does not define our children. They are unique, valuable, and whole. I hold a strong hope for the future: that technology will become more child-friendly—smaller, more comfortable, and sweat-resistant, so children can move freely. I hope that access will improve, with government and insurance support covering not only surgery but everything needed to keep the implant working, so therapy is never stopped due to the cost. I hope that early detection will be available in every city, so no child's critical developmental time is lost. Mikayla has shown us that with love,

technology, and perseverance, silence can turn into a beautiful symphony. Keep practicing. Keep learning. Somewhere ahead, sound is waiting to be heard.