

NEW FLORIDA: HELP THEM TO HEAR
SEGMENT SCRIPT
PRODUCER: JAIME GEORGE
(WPBT)

(NATS)

VO 1: Like most kids her age, five-year-old Vivienne Crews enjoys riding her bike, coloring, and spending time with her older sister, Skyler. But, Vivienne and Skyler don't communicate like most sisters.

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VO 2: You see, Vivienne was born with a profound degree of hearing loss.

MICHELLE CREWS, VIVIENNE'S MOM: "It was difficult for us to find information when we first found out about Vivienne's hearing loss. It was like pulling teeth to try to get information from the supposed services that were in place at the time. We had to do a lot of hunting."

VO 3: Eventually, the Crews family moved to Miami from West Florida so Vivienne could be enrolled in a special school. The school led them to audiologist Gary Friedman and The Hearing and Speech Center of Florida.

MICHELLE CREWS: "We came to see Gary about a year and a half ago. Vivienne had already had a pair of hearing aids, and they weren't doing a whole lot for her."

GARY FRIEDMAN, AUDIOLOGIST: "While I thought the basic hearing aid would do a job for her, trying to give her as much hearing as possible, even if it's just a little bit of an improvement, made sense."

VO 4: The hearing aids that made sense for Vivienne were digitally programmable and high-priced. The cost didn't seem like a problem until Michelle Crews found out her insurance wouldn't help pay for them.

MICHELLE CREWS: "We went ahead and submitted the letters and they still denied us. So, the aids she has are very expensive. I think retail value is close to \$4,000 for the pair."

VO 5: Fortunately, Michelle and Vivienne were at The Hearing and Speech Center of Florida, and the non-profit organization is home to the "Help Them to

Hear” scholarship program. The center’s director, Lillian Poms, says the program is very unique.

LILLIAN POMS, DIRECTOR, HEARING AND SPEECH CENTER OF FLORIDA: “I don’t think there’s another program like it in the United States that makes hearing aids available to children, and we’re not just talking about the indigent. We’re talking about working families who cannot incur the costs, with all the other cost they have, for children who need hearing aids.”

VO 6: In the ten years of its existence, the “Help Them to Hear” scholarship has helped more than 600 children get top quality hearing aids. It’s the reason Vivienne Crews has a chance to hear her dog bark and the doorbell ring.

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VO 7: The scholarship has done even more for eight-year-old Jorge Machado.

JORGE MACHADO: “My hearing aids help me hear a lot of things, but, sometimes, when I take them off, I cannot hear nothing.”

VO 8: Because Jorge has a lesser degree of hearing loss than Vivienne, his digitally programmable hearing aids give him nearly normal hearing.

GARY FRIEDMAN: “The young man we saw has more of a moderate loss of hearing in both ears, and he hears very well with hearing aids. My thinking is getting him the best quality hearing aid I can will provide this child who already has a lot of useable hearing the finest quality of hearing in a noisy classroom.”

VO 9: According to Jorge’s father, the hearing aids have done just that.

LUIS MACHADO, JORGE’S DAD: “Since the hearing aids have been a part of his life, he’s more talkative, more outgoing. He’s become an “A” student. He’s outstanding.”

VO 10: Without hearing aids, Jorge Machado would have been in danger of falling behind his peers.

GARY FRIEDMAN: “Children with a hearing loss even in one ear are 10 times as likely to fail a grade before they get to high school. They fall behind in speech and language development. Their reading scores are two and three years behind...”

VO 11: Without hearing aids, Vivienne Crews would simply have been in danger.

MICHELLE CREWS: “Just the fact that they provide her with environmental sound...it’s so important. Even if she’s out playing outside...for street traffic. Any kind of safety reasons really.”

VO 12: The success of children like Vivienne and Jorge are the reasons The Hearing and Speech Center of Florida and its “Help Them to Hear” scholarship exist.

LILLIAN POMS: “It makes all the difference in the world to these children’s future lives and also to the quality of their lives with their families...”

NAT SOT: “Good Job. All right. Keep listening.”

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