

Elias Is Our "Why"



For years Jay and Lori Catubig thought, "why us?" when questioning infertility issues and their desperate desire to have a child of their own. After pursuing licensure with the Department of Children and Families, a sweet little boy named Elias answered that question.

He is their "why."

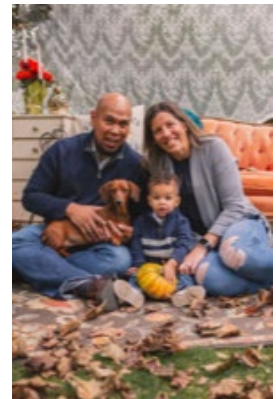
Born with a medical complexity called, Erb's Palsy, Elias essentially had no function in his right arm due to an injury he sustained during the birth of his brachial plexus. After complex surgeries and ongoing occupational therapy, Elias is doing very well. Although he does not have a normal range of motion, he finds ways to be successful.

This resilient two-year-old toddler has an affectionate nature and a big personality.

Elias was initially placed in kinship care with a blood relative where it was learned he would benefit from more extensive attention. His Occupational Therapist, Jennifer, and her husband, Ross, opened their home to Elias as a temporary foster care placement. They cared for Elias while the Department worked towards permanency.

The Catubig's were chosen as a permanent home for Elias through the teaming process. "When our social worker, Becky, showed us Elias's picture, we just melted. We felt so lucky to have been chosen," explained Lori.

Rebecca Bruey, the DCF Social Worker for the family, shared, "I remember facilitating the disclosure meeting, and then meeting Jay and Lori for the first time at an OT appointment, and instantly knew this was the perfect placement for Elias. I don't think anyone could have handpicked a better placement for him. Their commitment and love for Elias is undeniable."



On March 29, 2021, Elias transitioned to their home. It was because of Lori's experience as an Occupational Therapist that she qualified to be a medically complex foster parent for Elias, however, medical expertise is not required to provide care to children with this designation.

Within the Department of Children and Families, there is a group of children who have medical care needs that go beyond routine well-child care and common childhood illnesses. These children may have challenges that range from a child who requires daily medications for mild-persistent asthma to a child who must have assistance with all their care due to severe cerebral palsy or other complex medical conditions. DCF designates children with complex medical needs into a 4-tiered classification system. Children who are in Classification 4 are the children with the most complex medical and associated care needs while children in

Classification 1, have fewer care needs and less medical risk. All caregivers of children with complex medical needs are required to have additional health-related training that is facilitated by the Department.

On the weekend before Elias was placed in the Catubig home, Lori reached out to Jennifer (Elias' temporary foster mom) to introduce herself. After a few words that led to an hour-long telephone conversation, a deep friendship and mutual love for a little boy was discovered. Jennifer echoes Lori's sentiments. "There is no better gift than to stay a part of Elias's life and to be friends with Lori and Jay".



An open adoption was agreed upon between the Catubig's and Elias' mother. There are weekly emails, shared photographs, and a one-time year in-person visit. "We are in a really good place with Elias's Mom," Lori explained.

Holding back tears, Lori spoke emotionally about her journey to motherhood and the way that her extended family has embraced Elias as their own. "He is so loved, so very loved," she explained. When asked to describe Elias, Lori paused, and with true joy in her tone, she explained that he is super lovable, sweet, just so sweet and so much fun to be with. He loves to cuddle and adores Mickey Mouse, pasta, hamburgers, and desserts, adding that she could talk about him for days.

Lori feels that Elias is a match made in Heaven. She and Jay now have a son of their own and a friendship with Jennifer and Ross that is more like family.



Jennifer and Ross vacation with the Catubig's and provide respite for Elias.



Elias was adopted by Lori and Jay Catubig on National Adoption Day, November 18, 2022. A caravan of supporters traveled to the Torrington court to celebrate this memorable day.

"My heart is just exploding", Lori explained. I want the whole world to know that he is my boy!" she added.

Watch the video of the adoption here: [Glastonbury Couple Officially Adopts Son on National Adoption Day](#)

