

## Hila

### From the moment they met, Brandy and Hila *knew* they were meant to be a family...

In 2012, Brandy longed for a baby, and her home was full of love just waiting to be shared. One day, she sat down at her computer to search for the child that would complete her family. She imagined the search would be overwhelming—with so many children in need of a home, how could she choose just one? But on this day, there was only one profile listed; Hila's profile.

Hila's biological parents loved her, but knew they couldn't provide the lifetime care she needed. So after careful consideration, they asked CHSofNJ to find their daughter a forever family that could.

Hila had been diagnosed with Cornelia De Lange Syndrome, a developmental disorder characterized by slow growth, intellectual disabilities, gastro-intestinal issues, and skeletal abnormalities of the arms and hands. Brandy learned that Hila's diagnoses made her 1 in nearly 30,000. But when she saw a photo of Hila's sweet face, she knew that this child was much more special than 1 in 30,000.

All night Brandy thought about Hila, so when she woke up the next morning, she logged onto the internet again. But this time, Brandy was shocked to see dozens of children staring back at her from her monitor. She thought how strange for so many adoption profiles to be posted overnight! But then Brandy noticed that these children had been added days, some even weeks before she had found Hila. Brandy knew this computer glitch was a sign that Hila was the child she was *meant* to find.

After speaking with Hila's caseworker in great detail about her physical and emotional needs, Brandy felt confident she could provide the loving care a medically fragile baby like Hila deserved. She excitedly made her first trip to visit Hila in her CHSofNJ foster home. Once there, Brandy worried that Hila would be afraid, as they had only just met. But as she was placed in Brandy's arms, it just felt *right*. And Hila wasn't scared! Instead, she reached up to Brandy's chin, and her foster parents laughed and explained Hila had just signed the word "mommy" on Brandy's chin; **Hila knew as quickly as Brandy that they were meant to be a family.**

Since joining Brandy's family, Hila has made tremendous progress. Doctors warned at birth that she might never move her legs, but today Hila can sit on her own and is learning to pull herself up to a seated position all by herself. She can even stand with support for nearly 30 seconds! A CHSofNJ board member with expertise in child development understood that Hila's brain was capable of much more than her body would allow, so she gifted Hila an iPad to support her cognitive growth. Brandy has also purchased a speech device app for the iPad to further her communication abilities. Although she still communicates primarily through sign-language, Hila can now make familiar word sounds! She is a remarkably strong, bright little girl showing improvement in every area of her development!

Brandy is grateful for the hard work of CHSofNJ in bringing such an extraordinary child into her life. She is also thankful for Hila's loving CHSofNJ foster parents who have become extended family for Hila; at Brandy's request, the two families keep in touch through email and occasional visits. Thanks to the programs and services of CHSofNJ, Hila is surrounded by people who love her, believe in her, and will give her the full life she deserves.

**Hila's happily ever after was made possible through CHSofNJ's Child Welfare/Permanency Services**

