

Zhandri Martin BIO

Upon meeting four year old Zhandri Martin, one may immediately notice his small stature and his mischievous, heart-melting smile. According to Ms. Madison, a RN at the Lily Pad, "Zhandri brightens each and every day with his spunky personality and big heart." Unless you are a part of Zhandri's daily life, you would never know this outgoing, loving little boy, who never meets a stranger, lives with a life-altering disease. At birth, Zhandri was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis.

Cystic Fibrosis is a life threatening genetic disease that affects the movement of sodium chloride (salt) in and out of certain cells, resulting in: thick, sticky mucous in the lungs, salty sweat and thickened digestive juices. As a result, lung infections are common in cystic fibrosis patients as well as poor absorption of nutrients to the body.

In order for Zhandri to function at his best, he must participate in an approximate two hour medicine regimen daily. He uses a Respi-tech vest two times a day as part of his Chest Percussion Therapy (CPT). This therapy helps loosen the mucous or secretion from his lungs so he can cough them up. He also receives inhalers before and after the CPTs and three breathing treatments daily. Zhandri is also on a high calorie diet to help him gain the weight that he needs. Along with the high calorie diet, Zhandri must take enzymes before each meal and snack. The enzymes help him to better digest food so that his body can absorb all the nutrients it needs.

As working parents of six active children, two of which have been diagnosed with cystic fibrosis, Zhandri's parents have had to learn to manage the children's busy schedules along with being cystic fibrosis advocates. With their busy lives, Tamara and Kenton are very grateful for the services provided through the Lily Pad at Easter Seals West Kentucky.

Zhandri attends preschool at the Lily Pad five days a week. According to his teacher, Mrs. Amanda, he is learning to recognize letters and their sounds, is working on counting and shapes and is learning to spell his name. All of his health needs are met by a loving medical staff while at school. Zhandri also uses the Easter Seals van as transportation home three times a week.

The Lily Pad at Easter Seals West Kentucky is a Prescribed Pediatric Extended Care Program. It is the only program of this kind in western Kentucky and provides medical, child development and preschool services for children with complex medical diagnosis. These children are now able to learn and play with their peers, while receiving the specialized medical care they require. Parents of these children are able to return to work or school, with the comfort that their child is being cared for by registered nurses, certified nurse aids and a certified teachers, in a social and educational environment.

Through your contributions to the Lions Club/WPSD Local 6 Telethon of Stars, the Lily Pad continues to grow. Through your generosity, Zhandri and his friends enrolled in the Lily Pad at Easter Seals West Kentucky will continue to receive the services needed to learn, play and grow, thus ensuring their successes in life!