

## **Arc of Southeast Iowa provides care and support for families**

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Pammy Quintero-Rodriguez, age 5, lives in Coralville with her proud, loving parents, Patty and Domingo. According to Patty, her daughter is a "miracle girl."

"When she was born, we were told she may never walk, talk or eat. She has had eight surgeries to date: two heart surgeries; eye surgery; hip surgery; surgery on intestines and back surgery. She almost died twice and for several years had to be on oxygen 24/7," she said.

Domingo added, "We are grateful for all the doctors and medical professionals Pammy has had in her life."

"She used to cry and be scared all the time. She was even afraid of me," Patty said.

However, as Pammy kept trying, her parents refused to quit on her.

"We believed if she can try, we can try," Patty said. "I wanted her to see that she would be OK and that her father and I are so proud of her."

Through support of the United Way of Johnson County, the Arc of Southeast Iowa has been able to provide caregivers to allow the family to engage in the usual pursuits of a busy family. Pammy has received services from the Arc for more than 4 years.

"We are grateful for all of the wonderful support they provide us. We're also very grateful for the love the caregivers the Arc of Southeast Iowa provide," Patty said. "We don't even think of the caregivers as caregivers, we think of them as family."

The progress she has made over the past few years has been a miracle, according to her proud parents. She walks, talks (English and Spanish) and sings. She can even eat a few foods on her own. According to her parents, their daughter is full of spirit, life and love.

"One time I put her shoes on the wrong feet and I said, 'I'm a silly mother!' She said, 'No, you are a good mother!'"

Recently, Pammy had her hair cut and donated it all to Locks of Love.

"We are so happy and grateful that God put Pammy in our lives. We treasure each and every day of life with her," Patty and Domingo said.

The Arc of Southeast Iowa assists developmentally disabled individuals in our community to realize their full potential in how they live, learn, work and play.

The organization was formed in 1957 by a group of parents and professionals interested in the welfare of individuals with mental retardation. Since that time, The Arc has been active in providing classes, supporting programs, encouraging legislation and increasing public awareness of the needs of individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities.



Through support of the United Way of Johnson County, the Arc of Southeast Iowa has been able to provide caregivers to allow Patty and Domingo Quintero-Rodriguez and their daughter, Pammy, 5, to engage in the usual pursuits of a busy family despite Pammy having had eight surgeries, including two for her heart. (Special to the Press-Citizen)