

## Patient Profile

### BATHURST OUTREACH CLINIC PATIENT



#### CASSANDRA, 14 YEARS OLD

Cassandra was born with her feet turned inwards. None of the doctors in her community could diagnose her condition. It was when her mother turned to Shriners Hospitals for Children®- Canada that she finally got answers to her questions, and found out that yes, her daughter would finally walk one day. Cassandra had club feet.

**« The consultation that changed my life! »**

Since birth, Cassandra had been seen by many doctors, but none of them could diagnose her condition. Her mother Guylaine didn't know where to turn.

It was during a conversation with one of the secretaries at the school where Guylaine teaches, that she learned about Shriners Hospitals for Children®- Canada in Montreal, and that was when the process began.

The clinic had not yet begun operations at the time. After having scheduled an appointment in Montreal in May of 2000, Cassandra, who was two at the time, was taken immediately under the care of Thierry Benaroch, M.D., who specializes in pediatric orthopaedic surgery. He assured Guylaine that he would get her daughter back on her feet. He also informed her that her daughter would have greatly benefited by being seen during her first week of life; as babies who are between 4-6 days have bones which are much more malleable. This allows the application of the Ponsetti technique, which consists of manipulating the feet and immobilizing them with a specialized cast, much easier.

This technique required 3 years of treatment, which is very demanding for families. However, with a success rate of almost 90%, parents and healthcare professionals believe that the results are worth the efforts.

For Cassandra, she had her first cast at the age of two. She then travelled back and forth between Bathurst and Montreal, sometimes every two weeks to a month, to have

her cast removed and have the position of her feet corrected and have another cast done or be fitted with orthotics. Eventually, the visits to Montreal became less frequent and were only required each three to six months.

In 2004, shortly after her 6th birthday, Dr. Benaroch performed tendon surgery on Cassandra. It was also in 2004 that Cassandra began follow-up appointments with Francois Fassier, M.D., at the Shriners Hospitals for Children®- Canada and Chaleur Regional Hospital outreach clinic. Cassandra also undertook countless hours of physiotherapy.

Cassandra hasn't returned to the hospital in Montreal since 2004 but she remembers the red roof and crying each time she had to go, but that Dr. Benaroch would comfort her by making her laugh by imitating elephants, giraffes and even dogs!

Today Cassandra likes to swim, exercise and walk. She also loves playing with her dog Daisy and her cat Grisette. She is also quite responsible and babysits on occasion. One day she hopes to work with children or animals... perhaps even with elephants or giraffes!