

Our 3 1/2 year old grandson, Otis, has been having seizures since he was about 9 weeks old. There has not been a day since that he has not had multiple seizures, almost always in the hundreds. One 24 hour EEG showed him to have over 400 during that 24 hours, another time the doctors wouldn't say how many, only that it was significantly over 400. This is not something he will outgrow, and it will most likely progress in severity without a medical solution.

Since he was diagnosed with epilepsy, he has been to several specialists in 3 different hospitals who have put Otis on over a dozen pharmaceuticals, a Vagus Nerve Stimulator that was surgically implanted, and he has suffered through the Ketogenic Diet. All of these have failed our little Otis, but several gave terrible side effects, such as an enlarged heart, soft bones (which helped cause a broken leg), and agitation.

Surgery to remove part of his brain has been discussed, but since his seizure activity is not localized to only 1 part of the brain, this is not something that our son and daughter-in-law want to do until all other methods are ruled ineffective, and we totally agree with them.

Over a year ago we started reading about medical marijuana helping children with seizures. There was not a moment of hesitation in our minds that Otis needed to try this. We've watched his little body as he seizes, and the crying that sometimes follow breaks our hearts. He doesn't understand what is happening, and neither do we! We've also watched as developmentally he is not even close to doing things other 3 year olds do. While he can roll over, bring a spoon to his mouth, and is beginning to "army crawl," he has never crawled, walked or sat up by himself longer than about 1 minute. He will sometimes vocalize, but we've never heard him say a word.

We love this sweet boy with all our hearts, and our hearts break that he has to suffer. Our hearts also break when we watch our son and daughter-in-law hold Otis while he is having seizures. We are saddened that Ryan had to leave his teaching career, and the many students that will never be able to experience his ability to help kids learn and grow. We were also broken hearted as this little family had to leave Kansas to pursue the medical treatment that might help Otis.

We have been able to visit them in Colorado often, and have met several of the families that also have heart breaking stories. Several of these families have children who have seen a huge reduction of seizures which allows them to grow developmentally. We rejoice with them and remain hopeful that someday medical marijuana will do the same for Otis!

Rarely do we take a trip to the grocery store, the post office, our church or a committee meeting that at least one person doesn't ask about Otis. In all of the hundreds of conversations I've had with people, no one has ever questioned why Ryan and Kathy would give Otis medical marijuana. Many of these people are Senior Citizens. They all agree that if they were in those shoes, they would do the same thing. We simply want to do the best for Otis.

We will be moving to Colorado soon, to be closer to Ryan, Kathy and Otis. Neither of us has ever lived in another state. We built our home over 25 years ago, and have been an active part of our community for longer than that. Donna is a retired elementary teacher, and David will be retiring from Baker University soon. We love Kansas, but feel the need to leave.

We would like to see the laws in Kansas change, so that medical marijuana is legal and available for those who need it. We not only want this to happen so that our grandson can benefit, but also for the many others who could benefit as well. We have many friends with Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, and Cancer. There is success stories associated with these as well. Please let Kansas help the many people who suffer. We hope medical marijuana can soon be researched and legalized in Kansas. Thank you for reading.

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