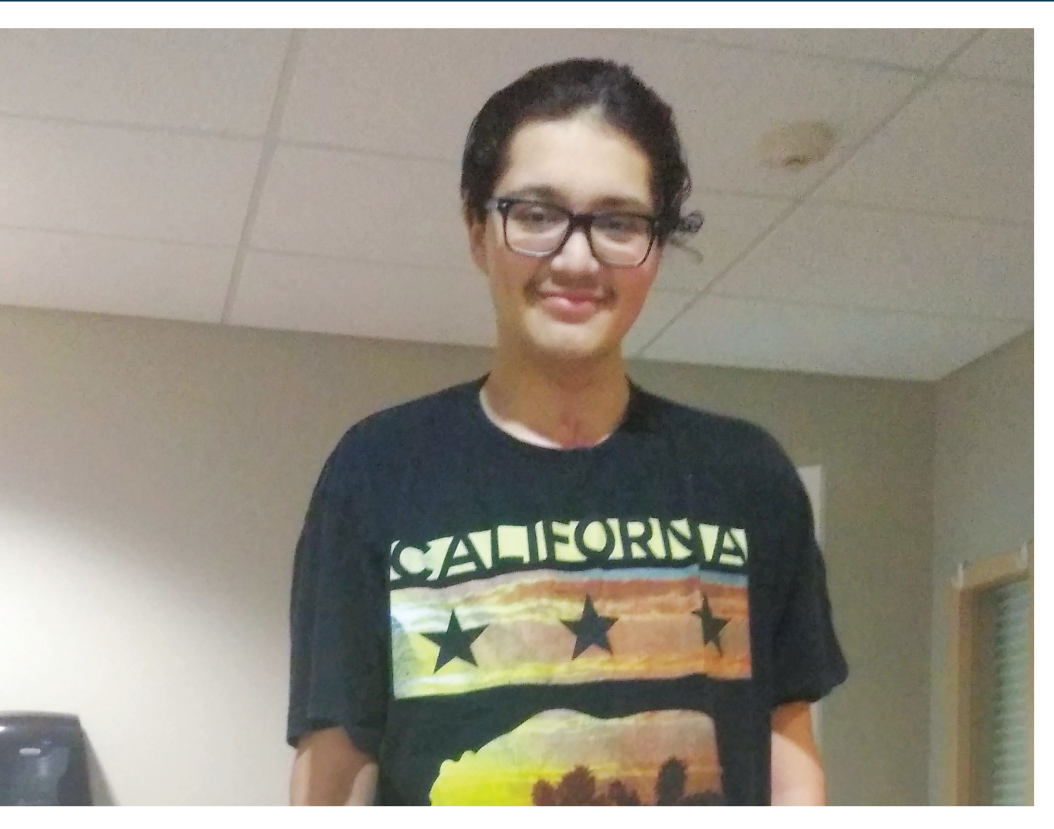


NEXUS CHAMPION

JUAN LARA



“ At some point, I became more patient and realized I could do this. ”

“I fell down and couldn’t move,” said Juan Lara, a former Nexus Children’s Hospital patient. “I don’t remember much since I blacked out, but I’ve been told I was taken to the emergency room and the doctors started procedures.” Juan was recalling the day he was shot in the upper neck and throat. He suffered a spinal cord injury as the bullet exited out the back of his head.

The doctors at a hospital in the Houston Medical Center performed numerous surgeries — one that almost took Juan’s life. His mother, Jasmin, said, “It’s a miracle he’s alive. He flatlined for one minute during a surgery. I was told after that if he didn’t wake up in a 72 hours, that he’d end up in a vegetative state.”

Juan stayed at the first hospital for a couple weeks, undergoing five surgeries and requiring a tracheostomy and then a second revision surgery due to complications. As a result, he couldn’t speak or feed himself.

“I was in bad shape when I finally was sent to Nexus Children’s Hospital,” explained Juan. “I was mad at everyone and had no patience, mostly because I didn’t understand what was going on.”

However, Juan said as time flew by, he became more comfortable with the situation. His mother said, “Just two weeks after he got to Nexus, I had hope.”

Juan admitted with a complicated trach site and stoma. Jian, his wound care nurse, said, “He struggled in the beginning because he was in a great amount of pain, but in the wound care program he continued to improve. With his determination, the wound officially closed!”

He also participated in physical, occupational, and speech therapy to regain the strength and skills necessary to be more independent.

“Therapy started slow. At first, I was freaking out because I wondered if I would ever move again,” said Juan. “At some point, I became more patient and realized I could do this. My therapists helped me achieve what I needed to do. They were able to make me who I am right now.”

Juan’s therapists agree that all of a sudden, something changed in Juan and he became more determined than ever.

“One day, Juan made the decision to work incredibly hard in therapy and we saw very rapid improvement in his strength and mobility,” said Brenda, his physical therapist. “He’s come a very long way in his recovery. I am so proud of the effort he has put forth.”

His speech therapist, Taryn, also shared, “It was amazing to see Juan overcome his fears of the unknown throughout his recovery. He came such a long way in a short period of time.”

By all accounts, Juan is a friendly and kind young man who loves a good joke, being outdoors, dancing, and playing the euphonium in his high school band. As he looked forward to discharge, Juan hoped to continue working to improve his left arm mobility so he could do all his favorite activities again. He also shared he was looking forward to going back to high school.

“Nexus has really helped me be able to recover more,” explained Juan. “I was able to socialize in the activities room and make a bunch of really good friends instead of being cooped up in my room. Everyone was also very supportive and accepted me. I’d really like say thank you to all the staff for their patience and effort that helped me get to where I am today.”

Jasmin also shared, “I give Nexus 5/5! The doctors and nurses were professional and always kept me informed. They were able to pick up where the last hospital left off. Juan came here not moving or doing anything and look at him today!”

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