

*Our daughter, Sophia, was born perfectly healthy and lived the first 6 years of her life as a very active, outgoing, adventurous little girl. She loved ballet, running faster than her older brother, and planning parties.*



*We had no idea that there was a ticking time bomb in her brain that would change our lives forever. On November 5, 2017 at 2am, Sophia woke up in the middle of the night with a terrible headache and in the ER that night we learned of the Arteriovenous Malformation (AVM) that had ruptured which caused a hemorrhagic stroke. She later had an ischemic stroke as well, which affected the entire right side of her brain. The next five months was a nightmare as we watched our little girl spend four weeks in a coma, go through four brain surgeries, endure medication withdrawal, and wake up as an entirely different child than we'd had before.*

*Slowly but surely she learned how to breathe on her own, eat, talk and walk again. Every day was a battle that she had to win and I was so thankful the determined little girl she'd always been had remained. In time she was happy and healthy despite all she'd been through, but had lost all function in her left hand, wrist, ankle and toes and had many mobility, learning, memory and speech disabilities. Almost two years after her AVM rupture and strokes, my aunt read about a new stroke recovery treatment in a magazine. She told me about a doctor in Germany, Nils H. Thoennissen, who was leading the way in this treatment and urged us to look into his clinic. We have always been open to trying new and ground-breaking treatments and therapies to give Sophia the best chance at a successful life as we can, so we eagerly went to the*

*CBC Health website and shortly thereafter spoke with Dr. Thoennissen on the phone where we had many of our questions answered that very day.*

*Over the next couple of weeks we had more questions answered thoroughly by email and also by phone with the liaison call center in Florida. Once the decision was made to go through with the cord blood treatment, we planned for the trip which would take place about three months later, in January of 2020.*

*About once a week we received a phone call from the clinic where they checked in with us, got our flight information, sent us tips and travel info on the city of Munich, Germany, etc. Once we arrived at our hotel, we were in contact with the clinic concierge, Daniel, who let us know the itinerary for the week and made plans to meet us the next day at the hotel. The next morning he put us at ease immediately with his near-perfect English and sense of humor as he escorted us to the clinic. That first day we met with Dr. Thoennissen and his staff, which were all so nice and helpful. The clinic is comfortable and modern, with large rooms (and the kids were pleased to find lots of chocolate). Dr. T got Sophia's medical history and answered any and all questions we had, including explaining the cord blood infusion process clearly. After her lab work was drawn, we were free to explore the city, which was beautiful despite the winter weather. The second and third days were*



*spent doing the cord blood infusion, which went smoothly. The doctor did not leave Sophia's side while her vitals were monitored frequently and she was kept very comfortable. In the evenings when we went back to the hotel, Dr. Thoennissen kept in touch with us via phone, checking in multiple times and making sure all was well. The final day we went back to the clinic for her last check-in. We were provided with medical information to give to Sophia's doctors back home about the treatment she'd received and planned a virtual check-in for about three months post infusion. After our week in Munich, Daniel arranged for transportation to the airport, taking us all the way to the check-in desk, which was so helpful!*

*Overall, we were very pleased with the entire process. CBC Health went above and beyond to help us feel confident in the treatment, and Dr. Thoennissen and his staff proved to be invested in Sophia as a person, and truly hopeful for a great outcome for her stroke recovery. It has been eleven weeks since her cord blood infusion, and we have already begun seeing some good progress in her, mentally and physically. For example, she has been able to walk without her AFO brace, which was nearly impossible before, and has new purposeful movement in her left toes and ankle. Her speech therapist has noticed gains during her outpatient treatments, and as a family we feel her personality has become more vibrant and more like her old self than ever before. We are certain that even more success will become evident in the next few months.*

