

Ivan Finds His Voice

Ivan Garcia is an energetic 11 year old whose smiling sweet eyes and high energy are quick to charm. But his parents Ana and Elder will tell you that he wasn't always like this. At 3 years of age, Ivan was almost unnoticeable. Painfully thin, he was small for his age, very quiet and shy.

When family friends came to visit, they quickly noticed that Ivan still spoke in a baby language using only five words: mom, dad, water, milk and ball. When other children Ivan's age would try to talk with him, he didn't understand them. So they would speak very slowly and very loudly hoping a greater volume would help Ivan understand. While everyone could see it was exasperating to Ivan, he still didn't understand.

Ana and Elder tried not to show their concern about Ivan, but they were very worried. The family doctor had no explanation why Ivan wasn't talking like the other children or why Ivan was tired so much and was sick with a cold or flu every few weeks. Everyone agreed Ivan should eat more. But when his mother served him meals, he would point to the kitchen wanting something different. When his mother didn't bring him the food he craved, he became angry, sipped some milk and ran off alone in tears.

When Ivan was 3 1/2, the family's church, Fuente de Esperanza Covenant Church began distributing free vitamins from Nourish America, Rev. Hugo made sure the family received vitamins for Ivan. Hopeful that the vitamins would help him, his mother gave them to him every day.

A month later, Ivan was eating more, had more energy and was using more words. Hopeful that Ivan was catching up to his peers, his parents enrolled him in pre-school. There, Ivan was assigned to a speech therapist. After only six months, the teacher reported that Ivan had improved so quickly that he no longer needed her.

Ivan improvements were evident at home as well. As his vocabulary increased, he spoke more and more each day. He was making friends now and feeling confident with other children his own age. His shyness was disappearing while a great sense of humor and love for life emerged.

Today Ivan is an active, fun-loving boy. His mom says Ivan easily makes friends at his new school. Since kindergarten Ivan has been at grade level and doing well in school, though academics are not his final goal. Ivan wants to be a professional soccer player when he grows up. With all that energy, he just might make it.



Ivan Garcia