

Merry Christmas to you all! We are very thankful to once again be celebrating such a wonderful season of love and joy. Truly our Savior does bring us joy. Our family has experienced a lot of joy throughout this year.

Jared has made amazing progress this year. We attribute his progress to a little bit of inspiration that his Mommy got about his eating problem. Since that was solved he has made leaps and bounds in all areas. He now eats, with his mouth, the whole day through. He's fed a little through the tube at night and we are gradually decreasing that. He can walk with a little assistance and likes to even crawl on hands and knees now and then. He can say about 45 words now and is even starting to say some 2 word sentences. His first two word sentence was "Hi Bampa", which made his grandpa Peterson very happy. The joy Jared brings is felt everyday with his smiles.



Jacob has also grown up a lot this year. He has learned that he gets better results when he is tender and soft with Jared than the other way around. He loves his little brother, a LOT! Jacob writes his name very clearly now and can recognize almost every letter. He is a good thinker and has a great vocabulary. He told me, after watching Hercules, "the last drop fell down and disintegrated and so Hercules retained his strength". This is his last year of preschool and his mommy's last year of teaching preschool in a co-op group. Jacob brings joy to us with all the help he gives and all the love he shares.

Trent is a first grader with a lot of love. He truly wants to be a friend to everyone and wants everyone to be happy. He willingly shares what he has and wants to give things to all our visitors as well. He learned to ride a bike without training wheels this year. It has been rough for him, but he persevered and he even made it to the park last week. He has lost several teeth this year and got one pulled. He got through a very traumatic dental experience and we were very proud of him overcoming his fears. Trent gives us joy when he looks at us with those big blue eyes and says some sweet profound truth with complete confidence.

Dean is our very studious 3<sup>rd</sup> grader. He continues to get straight A's and is very meticulous with his handwriting and other things. He's a perfectionist to the end. He loves to play soccer and football with his friends at school and wishes we had a bigger space to play in our backyard. He's finished the first 4 Harry Potter books and is about 1/4 of the way through the 5<sup>th</sup>. He loves everything Harry Potter. He's even started writing his own Harry Potter book. Dean brings us joy each countless time he has willingly and lovingly helped with Jared when Mommy couldn't get there just yet.



David is a born leader and good friend. He often leads all the brothers in imagination games. His teacher recently said she wished she could clone David and have a bunch of students just like him. He is helpful and kind and lots of fun. He is very laid back about most things and more open to new and adventurous things. He hiked into a cave with his uncle over Thanksgiving. The rest of us watched. He also helps with Jared a lot. David brings us joy as he kindly helps his younger brothers to learn something new.

Alicia is feeling a bit less busy as Jared's doctor's appointments have dramatically decreased. She still keeps herself busy with projects here and there. The new bedroom for Trent and Jacob has been the prevailing project lately. Thanks to her brother the new room will be truly something new and special for them. She is still working with the children at church and helping in cub scouts as well. She enjoys teaching her three oldest boys piano and loves to see them progress. Alicia brings joy by reading to her children and being a sounding board for Matt's next book.

Matt is in up to his neck with his second book. He'll probably be finished with the rough draft about mid-January. He has enjoyed traveling all over the North American continent to go to various conferences this year. He's met many important people and hopes one of those contacts will be the source of his future success. He has recently won many awards for his audio book and is pleased to say that it is finally available on audible.com. Producing his own audio book was a huge undertaking and he's glad it's over. You can see much more about him and his book on his website [www.paraworlds.com](http://www.paraworlds.com) Matt brings joy to his family as he trusts in the Lord and does what he knows is right in a world that tells him it's wrong.

The joy we have found this year is overflowing in our lives. We truly hope that you all can feel of the joy that our Savior and Redeemer has to bring. His endless power to lift us up when we are down is there for all of us. May you all have a Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year.

Love,

The Petersons (Matt, Alicia, David, Dean, Trent, Jacob & Jared)

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