



Mac

“The first year of his life, we spent six months at Valley Children’s. That’s where he needed to be. So many of the staff are like second family.”

-Veronica, Mac’s mom

At 37 weeks pregnant, Veronica woke up in labor at 4 a.m., then rushed to the hospital. A little more than an hour later, Mac was born. Mac had spina bifida and a severe form of Chiari malformation, a condition where brain anatomy extends into the spinal canal. Because of his critical condition, he was transported to Valley Children’s Hospital with his father and pastor trailing close behind.

A little more than just 24 hours after his birth, Mac had surgery to close his spina bifida lesion and was treated in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) for over two weeks. Veronica sat next to Mac, talking to him while he was in his isolette incubator.

Mac has been admitted to the hospital more than 100 times, with 14 weeks being his longest inpatient stay. His diagnosis has caused him to need a tracheostomy tube to help him breathe and a gastrostomy tube to help him eat.

Through the years, Mac has received a total of 34 major surgeries at Valley Children’s. Veronica says they have seen practically every specialty at the hospital, including neurology, neurosurgery, urology, pulmonology, ENT, gastroenterology,

plastic surgery, rehabilitation, orthopaedics and nephrology. “The trust doctors have shown in Mac’s ability is astounding. It’s something I have not found to be the case elsewhere,” says Veronica.

Mac is now 11 years old and in the sixth grade, homeschooled by his mom. He has a much-loved aardvark plushie he calls “Voth” and has a collection of George the giraffe toys.

While Mac enjoys reading, and playing video games, board games and card games, he absolutely loves watching sports, especially baseball and football. One of his favorite teams is the San Francisco Giants, whose colors he proudly sports on his wheelchair.

Despite his medical struggles, Mac has always been a happy child. Veronica says, “Mac is always smiling and always has a great attitude. No matter how his own day is going, his goal is for others to have a better day.” When he grows up, Mac wants to be a veterinarian or a sports agent. Veronica agrees either career path fits his warm personality perfectly.