For Immediate Release

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Photo Caption: Tracy Martin, MOT, OTR/L, Occupational Therapist at Southeastern Med works with Lerick Porter on developing fine motor skills by placing beads on a string.

The Power of Pediatric Occupational Therapy: Lerick Porter's Story

CAMBRIDGE, Ohio, April. 8, 2013 –Anthony and Ericka Porter first noticed something was wrong with their son Lerick's right hand when he was 3 months old. "He completely neglected his right arm," Ericka said. "He kept his right hand in a tight first almost constantly."

During a visit to the pediatrician, Ericka mentioned her concerns about Lerick's arm, and he recommended Lerick be evaluated by an occupational therapist. "We assumed we would have

to travel to Columbus for therapy," Ericka said. "We were beyond thrilled and relieved to find out Southeastern Med offered pediatric therapy so close to home."

During his evaluation, Tracy Martin, MOT, OTR/L, Occupational Therapist, suggested Lerick receive occupational therapy (OT) to address the developmental delays in his upper right extremity. At the age of 4 months, Lerick began OT at Southeastern Med's Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation Services facility.

Lerick initially received therapy twice a week for 30 minutes each session. As he progressed, sessions gradually decreased to once a month. His therapy sessions often consisted of neuromuscular reeducation and electrical stimulation to improve the movement, coordination and strength of his affected arm. "We also used a modified version of constraint therapy, which basically put the unaffected or good arm in a restraint, so he was forced to use the arm that was affected," Martin said. "He absolutely hated this, but again, it was successful. As he began to gain movement, we began to isolate more fine motor movement skills with his right hand, enabling him to pick up smaller objects with his hand and fingers."

Lerick's parents played a huge role in his success by learning the various techniques utilized during therapy and implementing them at home. "A successful recovery includes the therapist educating the parents and the parents applying those techniques at home," Martin said.

In addition to therapy, Ericka and Anthony were both determined and dedicated to finding a diagnosis for their son's condition. After countless tests, at 13 months old, a pediatric neurologist concluded that Lerick had suffered a sizeable stroke during utero or at birth.

"Tracy Martin was an absolute God send," Ericka said. "Not only is she an amazing therapist, but you can tell she genuinely cares about my son and his recovery. She was there for us when we received the stroke diagnosis and helped us realize that it was not the end of the world and that Lerick still had a lot of rehab potential."

After two years, Lerick's was discharged from OT with a Benik supportive glove and a functional right arm and hand on January 8. "I am extremely thankful for the wonderful occupational therapists for all they have given my son," Ericka said. "I now have a very active 2-year-old boy, and I couldn't ask for better results."

Pediatric occupational therapists at Southeastern Med work with children of all ages to help them meet developmental milestones through therapeutic play and age appropriate activities in a safe and fun environment. Treatment programs are family-centered and based on individual

evaluation. Treatment is recommended as early in age as possible in order for children to obtain optimal function.

For more information about pediatric occupational therapy at Southeastern Med, please call 740-439-8977.