

The story of Brianna DiCianni is compelling and all too true. At the age of two, Brianna was not speaking, not babbling -- not even able to say mommy or daddy. Her parents' Pete and Rose DiCianni thought maybe she was a late bloomer. Perhaps her older siblings spoke for her and she didn't need too. But it was much more than that. It turned out to be autism that was robbing her ability to speak. Brianna was one of 30 children in Elmhurst in the last two years diagnosed with our country's number one children's disorder -- one which robs many children of the basic ability to speak and interact. Fortunately Pete and Rose knew of the Center for Speech and Language Disorders, CSLD, where Brianna has received aggressive speech therapy from its founder, Phyllis Kupperman. Brianna now has the gift of talking.

Every year CSLD serves hundreds of children both on the autism spectrum and with other language disorders that takes away one of our cherished abilities that is so key and vital in life, that's the ability to talk. CSLD's vision is that all children be able to communicate, socialize and thrive so they can succeed at whatever they wish to do. It is important that all children have the basic right to "speak".

It is with this spirit that we support the vital program's that CSLD has to offer, to be certain that CSLD is able continue this over 30 year endeavor to give these beautiful children the gift of speaking. That is why parents and friends of CSLD have put together the first Annual Brianna and Friends, "Walk to Talk" chaired and coordinated by Dan Gibbons. We invite you to come share with your family and friends the gift of walking and talking and know that the funds raised on this great day will continue the fight to give all kids the basic right that is all too critical in life, the ability to talk!