

# In My Own Words....

By FELIPE L. - AGE 16

**I**N 1998, my life changed completely when I first came to Shriners Hospitals for Children in Springfield, Massachusetts from Chile. I was six years old and needed a new artificial leg and arm. I used to go to a hospital in Santiago, Chile, about two hours from my home each week for doctors appointments. Now I travel every summer to Shriners Hospital with my family for new prostheses and occupational therapy.

The leg prosthesis I received in Chile didn't have articulation in the knee, so it was very hard for me to do any sports or carry on a normal life like most kids. One day, we got struck by luck when we were contacted by a friend of my mother who resides in the United States. He gave us the information about Shriners Hospitals, so we traveled here with hopes that everything would work out well for me.

People at Shriners received me with great love and joy. I never really expected to come here or even travel to the United States. Now, with the prostheses from Shriners Hospital, I can stand on my two feet and even play my two favorite sports, soccer and tennis. It's like a dream come true for me. With the old leg prosthesis, I wasn't able to run or even think of playing these sports. With my hand prosthesis, I am able to do difficult tasks that I wasn't able to do before. Now I can cook for myself. I never imagined I would be able to make my own pizza.

I am very grateful for everything the people at Shriners Hospital have done for me. Thanks to all my doctors and therapists who have helped me in growing up as a normal kid. Now I feel like this Hospital is a great friend of mine. When I am over 21, I will certainly never forget the experiences I have had at Shriners Hospital, but for now I have many years to come to enjoy my time in Springfield at Shriners.

To finish this story, I want to thank you all once again for all the help, and I want you to know that if today I can have a tender smile on my face it is mainly because you have all done a great job in helping me carry on a normal life.



Felipe enjoys being on the soccer team at home in Chile.



PROSTHETIST Vincent Cremonti adjusts Felipe's new prosthetic leg.



Felipe had a lot of fun making his very own pizza in occupational therapy.



TENNIS IS ONE of Felipe's favorite sports.

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