



Family of the Month Meet Ivar, Ozzie and Lennie



Ivar came home from the hospital at 10 months with more than a dozen follow-up appointments scheduled with medical specialists. At each visit, we were told what Ivar couldn't do, wouldn't do and the uncertainty of his future. Today he is a sweet three-year-old who loves toys and playing computer games using the eye gaze at Lekotek. This innovative technology uses a camera that tracks his pupils. Just by looking he can direct the cursor. He can't walk, talk, hear or eat. But his Lekotek Leader, Jamie, always creates an accessible play environment so he can show us what he can do. During his play sessions, Ivar laughs, smiles and expresses his likes and dislikes.

Ivar's two older siblings, Ozzie and Lennie, look forward to Lekotek and getting to explore new toys, iPad and computer games too. In the photo above, Ivar (and his siblings) are changing the colors of each lighted tile simply by touching. Having a brother with significant special needs has changed them in many ways. Lekotek has helped them learn to appreciate Ivar's differences and engage with him. Our family is grateful for a place that focuses on Ivar's abilities and where all our children can have fun and learn together. The life of loving a child with special needs comes with many waves of grief. It is sweet to find Lekotek – a place dedicated to joy and play for all of us.



To All Lekotek Donors,

I am writing to share my experiences with Lekotek and to thank you for generously supporting their program. My wife and I have two daughters – a typical eight-year-old and a five-year-old with a rare genetic disease that limits her gross and fine motor skills. Lekotek experts use developmentally appropriate toys that not only provide tremendous entertainment but also help our little one improve her skills and coordination. Both of our daughters are excited to play and learn with Mia, our wonderful Lekotek Leader. Mia always has an adapted environment set up so our girls can play and learn together. Unlike toys that we purchase, the Lekotek toys we borrow are the ones our children play with most! Our oldest daughter's favorite iPad is the iPad loaned to us from Lekotek with apps for her and her little sister. They frequently talk about Mia at home in between visits. She is incredibly knowledgeable and dedicated.

Lekotek also provides wonderful programs that we enjoy as a family. We love Happy Tails visits where the girls play with therapy dogs (a favorite considering our oldest wants to be a veterinarian and our youngest loves animals). Music classes are perfect as our whole family enjoys singing and dancing in a safe and fun environment. We also enjoy the opportunity to meet other families at these events. We look forward to holiday parties, zoo day, fishing, rafting and all the community events Lekotek offers.

Helene Prokesch and her team are knowledgeable about adapted play, toys and technology. But their dedication and commitment to serving the special needs community is most notable. As a family with significant medical and therapy expenses, every bill adds up. Lekotek works with its stakeholders to ensure none are denied, providing scholarships so its services are available to everyone. Many of us in the special needs community can feel isolated and alone; because of Lekotek's services and the generosity of individuals like you, the world feels less lonely every day.

I know how appreciative Helene is for your generous support. As a parent and family who benefits, I appreciate the opportunity to write this letter to express our thanks on behalf of all children and families at Lekotek.

Sincerely,

Adam & Christy LeBlanc

Fall Events and Community Partners



The word, Lekotek is a made-up Swedish word meaning “play library”. Lekotek was initiated in the 1960s by two Scandinavian parents whose children had disabilities. They wanted their children to live at home rather than residential facilities. They believed all children should be included in their families, schools and communities. And so, they created Lekotek – a family-based program equipped with educational toys to promote inclusion. Today, Lekotek of Georgia’s inventory consists of adapted toys, educational materials and innovative computer and iPad technology.

In addition to **“including the child with disabilities into their family”**, part two of our mission statement is **“to include the family into the community”**. That’s why our events in the community are so important. Parents are often hesitant to attend events in the community, fearing their children will not have positive experiences.



Save the Date

LEKOTEK Brewfest 2023



SAT, FEB 11TH

7-10 PM

WWW.LEKOTEKGA.ORG

Limited Capacity - Sign Up Early!

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But our staff's creativity and support make it possible for our families to enjoy all that Atlanta has to offer just like any other family. Family activities include an annual Halloween Party and Holiday Party, Zoo Day, Pumpkin Patch Outing, Picnic, rafting and fishing trips with the Chattahoochee Nature Center, and attending professional sporting events. These photos were taken at the Halloween Party, (held AMS Vans), the Freedom Waters Boating event (held at Lake Lanier), Happy Tails and Berry Patch Farms. We thank these businesses and nonprofits for making our community events fun for all our families.

Toy of the Month Adapted Bubble Machine



Lekotek Leader and Site Manager of the Cobb Lekotek, Lisa Nevitt, is having fun with Kessley as she presses a large red button connected to an adapted bubble machine. Kessley is blowing bubbles for all of us to enjoy as we wait for the tracker to take us for a ride to the pumpkin patch where each child will pick their pumpkin.



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