



About Riley

Riley is a 15-year-old girl who is living with two rare disorders – Lennox-Gastaut syndrome (LGS) and tuberous sclerosis complex (TSC) – that were diagnosed while she was still a baby. Because of these conditions, she has never been able to speak. This has created day-to-day challenges for her parents and siblings in communicating with Riley.

However, even though she can't use words, Riley has found other outlets of self-expression – art and music – that have deepened her connection with her parents, Katherine and Tim, as well as her siblings.

As a little girl, Riley loved expressing herself by getting into her markers, paints and paper to create her own works of art. At a local fundraiser when she was five, Riley made her artistic mark – literally – on a canvas, along with other children with TSC, that an adult artist turned into a finished piece for auction. She even made her mark on the artist's clothing – for Riley, the world was her canvas!

Riley also has a strong affinity for music, which is a big part of her family's life. Her siblings love singing and playing the piano, guitar and clarinet. Her dad, Tim, also plays the guitar and that forged a special bond between him and Riley. In fact, during Tim's daily practice sessions with her siblings, Riley frequently put herself right in the middle of the lesson, climbing up on Tim's lap or placing a hand on his guitar. Eventually, Tim put a guitar in Riley's own hands; after that, she would strum along with him as they pretended to sing together, often for an hour at a time.

Riley enjoys other activities, too, like swimming in her family's backyard pool, being on their boat with the wind on her face, and watching the world through the car windows during the family's regular Sunday drives.

Unfortunately, Riley's conditions are progressive, so her interest in creating art and making music have started to slip away, leaving her parents to treasure those memories and her past art pieces "like the Crown Jewels."

In spite of the challenges, Riley's loved ones still find joy in her inner sweetness and resilience. In addition to inspiring her caregivers, school and church, Riley is the inspiration for *unspoken symphony*, a web-based image-recognition technology that translates an artwork into a unique melody. For Katherine and Tim, the gift of "hearing" Riley for the first time through her artworks has brought them immeasurable joy and a deeper understanding of their daughter's inner world.

unspoken symphony gives Riley, and others like her who struggle to express themselves verbally, a new way to communicate and connect like never before.