

MELODY S GIFTS

AN INSPIRATIONAL STORY OF A FAMILY'S DETERMINATION THAT NEITHER CEREBRAL PALSY NOR MENTAL RETARDATION WOULD SILENCE MELODY'S SONG

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Melodys Gifts: An Inspirational Story Of A Familys Determination That Neither Cerebral Palsy Nor Mental Retardation Would Silence Melodys Song This is the kind of book that will be hard for a reader, whether parent or special education professional, to put down. Melodys mother, Louise Wade, tells the story with intense emotions. She is not a writer but a mother with a story to tell, and she tells the story from her heart and soul. At times the reader may feel on top of the world, laughing and cheering at the adventures and victories of the family. At other times, the reader may cry softly as Louise expresses the depth of her grief that can only be found in a mothers heart. This is a true story, heartwarming, inspiring, and encouraging, about the authors daughter, Melody Marie, who was diagnosed at fourteen months of age to be profoundly brain damaged. Fortunately, the family was living in Pennsylvania at the time. They learned of the Doman-Delacato intensive patterning therapy program, which had a center just outside Philadelphia, and they were off and running. Louise moved with lightning speed to convince Jack, Melodys dad, and Mike, her seven year old brother, that the time had come to get little Melody crawling, creeping, walking and talking. A determined, driven mother with a bountiful supply of energy, Louise had soon organized small teams of patterners, all of which moved as little brigades to meet the enormous challenge. The familys energies were great and were rewarded with Melodys achievements. Their lives changed as Louise felt that the Lord was calling her into a lifelong career in special education. The career of Melodys dad, Jack, later changed to recreational therapy. Her older brother, Mike, majored in special education in college, and was President of the student chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children. Melody became an inspiration for each member of her family. The book reveals the inner-most feelings from her mothers heart about Melodys life from 1962 through 2008. She did her writing the old-fashioned way with pencil, paper, and lots of erasers. Louise, now in her seventies, has been relentless in her motivation. She applied great pressure on herself to get the story told before her health limited her physical activity. She drove sixty miles to enroll in a course called Writing Your Life Story. A small writing group emerged from the course and

Louise never missed their meetings. She plodded along for months and years, then began to feel discouraged that perhaps she would not be able to see this project through to publication. She met Sheila Nelson by happenstance. Sheila began by proof-reading Louises work, then a series of events and circumstances changed her role to that of re-writing Melodys story. Sheila recognized that the load seemed to be getting too heavy for Louise to carry alone to the finish line (publication). Louise describes Sheila as an answer to my prayers! She worked tirelessly with the greatest dedication to complete the work. Her devotion, talent and abilities were paramount in the publishing of this work. Emily Gabrysch and Daniel Burdess, students at New River Community College in Dublin, Virginia, designed the book cover. They took hundreds of pictures of Melody happily playing her spoons, tambourine, and bells. The family selected one picture and had it framed for Melodys bedroom door. From that day on, Melody repeatedly encouraged her mother to write in the book. The illustrations are from Melodys personal photo album and pictures in her bedroom especially designed for her enjoyment. Before she could talk, the family bombarded her with meaningful pictures. Each created much happiness for all. They proved to be valuable in her early language development. A picture is worth a thousand words actually may be critical in stimulating communication. Louise wants Melodys story to make a positive impact in as many liv

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