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GIRL'S STORY LED TO BOOM

Charlotte Figi's remarkable response to medical marijuana has encouraged hundreds of families with desperately ill children.

STORY 8

BY JOHN INGOLD

The CBD boom in Colorado started with a story.

There were 35 juvenile medical marijuana patients in Colorado in March 2013, when CNN landed in the state to film a documentary about one of them.

Since infancy, Charlotte Figi suffered from debilitating seizures due to Dravet syndrome. She practically lived at the hospital, where her parents, Paige and Matt, had signed do-not-resuscitate orders for their little girl. Every night when they went to sleep, Charlotte's older brother and twin sister said their goodbyes to her, not knowing whether she'd be alive in the morning.

Then, in February 2012, when Charlotte was 5, her parents gave her CBD, and everything changed literally overnight.

Charlotte slept soundly for the first time in years. She went seven days without a seizure. Over time, the seizures dropped from thousands a month to just a few. After not speaking for six months, she started talking again.

CBD wasn't a cure. Charlotte still has seizures, although Paige says she hasn't had one requiring hospitalization in two years. She has made leaps in her cognitive development, but, now 8 years old, she is only at the level of a 2-year-old, her mother said.

But, for the Figis, it was a new dawn:



Charlotte Figi, who suffers from Dravet syndrome, was the first known child in Colorado to use a form of high-CBD cannabis oil to treat her seizures. Before taking the medication, Charlotte experienced nearly 1,200 grand mal seizures per month; she now has fewer than 50. *AAron Ontiveroz, The Denver Post*

Their little girl was happy again.

"I didn't think she was in there anymore," Paige said. "I thought that Charlotte was gone."

Paige said Charlotte now takes only cannabis to control her seizures.

Despite the uncertainty over how often CBD works, Charlotte's story continues to show how transformative the treatment can be when it does work. She is the embodiment of the hope that has drawn families from across the country to Colorado.

"I had no idea it would be that big of a deal," Paige said. "I didn't understand ... that there were this many people who had nothing to try."