



## Tutu Cute

Luci loves all things soft and frilly, and her enthusiasm has rubbed off on the Children's staff who care for her.

It just takes one moment to make a difference in a child's life. A year after the birth of her first child, Tara Newton was browsing the website of Rainbow Kids, an online adoption advocacy organization, when she came across the picture of a little 3-year-old girl named Luci. "It was like she was looking at my soul," Tara recalled. "Everything became crystal clear at that moment."

Though Tara had a sense of clarity with visions of a new addition to the family, her husband Brian wasn't expecting his wife to approach him about adopting a child—and not just any child, but a young girl from China with severe scarring from burns on her head. Within one week's time, Brian too had the same sense of clarity, telling Tara, "This is what we're supposed to do."

As an infant in China, Luci suffered burns from just above her eyebrows across the entire top of her head, causing her to lose most of her hair and resulting in significant scarring. Abandoned as a baby, Luci spent three years in a Chinese orphanage before being placed into foster care.

Since her adoption, Luci has received several treatments through Children's. She underwent eye surgery at Egleston and then received scalp implants and recovery at Scottish Rite. Later this spring, she will receive another scalp transplant to move her hairline forward another two inches. Although the road to recovery hasn't always been easy, Tara empathizes with



Luci, a burn victim from China, has an enthusiasm for tutus that is celebrated by her caregivers at Children's.

her daughter every step of the way, because she knows how terrible burn wounds can be.

Five years ago, Tara was hit in the chest by an errant Fourth of July firework explosion. Her hair caught on fire, burning her face, neck, and arms extensively. She was hospitalized for 10 days and spent the following month and a half in recovery. Tara credits her patience and understanding with Luci's condition to her own tragic experience, and she knows it is why Luci was brought into her life.

Luci has seen a lot of Children's over the past few years and her enthusiasm for life has become infectious to those around her. Along with her colorful personality, her outfits certainly have not gone unnoticed by the Children's staff. While they may not be the most practical choice for day-to-day school attire, now 5-year-old Luci has made a habit of wearing tutus to her hospital visits.

"Y'all should wear tutus, too," Tara suggested to the staff one day. Tara couldn't think of a better place than a children's hospital for grown adults to wear colorful clothes. The nurses agreed and at Luci's next visit, her nurses donned colorful tutus and presented Luci with tickets to see the famous holiday ballet, *The Nutcracker*. "We've had an exceptional experience at Children's, and everyone has been so nice," said Tara.

Not only has Children's provided Luci with the best possible medical care, but also she has been given the gift of an incredible family. "It's amazing to watch Luci grow and thrive after everything she's been through. I'm so grateful that I can use my own experiences to help her through a hard time in her life. The support we have from Children's only makes it easier for both of us." ■