

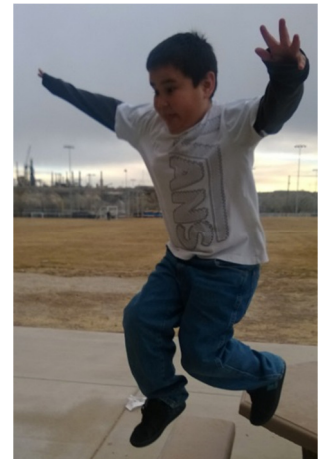
# Liam's Story

By Shoshanna Curley



During the 2013 boys' basketball season I was very fortunate to meet a young boy who was new to the game of basketball. Liam had never played the game of basketball and was one of the shyest and most hesitant kids to ever play for the Club. Liam is 8 years old and is a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader attending Central Elementary in Bloomfield, NM. Liam is a smart and funny boy but also very quiet too. When he came to register for basketball with his mom, I asked him "Are you excited to play?" He said "kind of but I'm nervous cause I might mess up". I told him "You will be just fine and at practice you will learn how to dribble and shoot a basketball, so this will be fun and you will make new friends". He said "I'm trying this out for the first time so I hope I do well". I told him "You will like it ... see you at practice next week". Liam walked off smiling as he left the building.

When Liam showed up for his first basketball practice he was timid and nervous. I could tell by his facial expression when he walked into the gym, he had the look on his face like "uh oh". Liam knew a few boys on his team from school but he didn't talk much to them and stood to the side as he watched the other boys practice. Liam's coach talked to him, I'm not sure what was said but he finally picked up the basketball and started to get involved with drills during practice. As practice went on Liam was still a bit tense and I noticed he wasn't really talking to his teammates. When practice was over I asked Liam "So what did you think of your first practice?" He said, "It was fine but I was nervous". I told him "I watched every one of you boys, don't worry, you did good. Being nervous is normal and it will go away". He said "I hope so cause the games will start soon".



With help from his parents and coach, Liam continued to improve during practices. When it came time for games, Liam had a whole new attitude about the game, his team and his skills. I noticed a difference in the way Liam handled himself, he was smiling and talking to his teammates more. Liam wasn't as nervous to play basketball like he was on the first day of practice. At his second to last game, he told me "Basketball is fun and I like it very much now". I told him "That's good and I hope you come back next year to play".



Liam improved in several ways throughout the course of the basketball season. By spending time at practice with his coach and other teammates Liam came out of his shell. He learned the basic fundamentals of the game, made friends, and learned that it all starts with the first practice. Liam is a great kid, very smart and very polite...and now we can add more outgoing to his list of achievements this season. By the last game everyone could see on Liam's face that he had built more confidence and improved his self-esteem. I really look forward to seeing Liam again next season. He is sure to continue improving and who knows...maybe even be an MVP.