



LSL Life – Kamen

[Coffee shop sounds]

Mom: *What do you want to eat today?*

Kamen: *Cheese and ham and muffin.*

Dad: *Is that the muffin?*

Kamen: *Yeah.*

Dad: *Are you sure?*

Kamen: *Yeah.*

Mom: Both of us are from Bulgaria.

Mom: We moved to the United States in 2004.

Mom: Bulgarian culture is very rich.

Mom: We try to keep some of the traditions alive.

Mom: We usually will have Bulgarian Christmas meals. For Easter, the different eggs and the Easter bread that Vassil's tried to make, almost every time.

Dad: Yeah, I like baking.

Mom: Yeah, he likes to bake.

Dad: And eating the result.

Mom: Yeah.

Dad: On the day when he was born, that was great experience and then it felt like the world shrunk.

Mom: When we received his hearing loss diagnosis I think I forgot about my long term plans. It was more short term. You focus on the daily tasks.

Dad: It was difficult. You don't see the light at the end of the tunnel. That's how I felt.

Dad: You will tend to think or hear more about the things that you child cannot be. Don't.

Dad: Just believe in him or her and do your best to support your child in that path and there is light.

Mom: *[Speaking Bulgarian] Swimming? Are you swimming, darling?*

Dad: *Patty cake, patty cake, boom boom boom.*

[Piano music]

Dad: *Whoa!*

[Laughter]

Dad: *Okay. How many eggs we have here?*

Kamen: *Two.*

Dad: *And how many do we need?*

Kamen: *Three.*

Mom: I've never thought about not sharing our culture with our son. It was more about how I'm going to do this.

Mom: How I'm going to expose him to this entire world without him able to hear it.

Mom: I think sign language is amazing. It's beautiful. But for main communication for our child, we use Listening and Spoken Language. It works really well.

- Kamen: *You put one hand up, two hands up. Then swing and then drop!*
- Dad: *Is it scary?*
- Kamen: *Nope. Not scary for me.*
- Mom: Listening and Spoken Language came very naturally for Kamen. We saw how he's learning sounds and words very fast. The biggest teacher is the parent. I know how to speak and I use my voice. And it seems like it really resonates with him.
- Dad: And for me it was also a little bit of the fear that I would not be able to get to the proficiency level of sign language where I can teach him everything that I want to teach him. To transfer all that knowledge that I have to him.
- Dad: *What kind of bread are we making?*
- Kamen: *Christmas bread.*
- Mom: For New Year's, our tradition was to get a few other Bulgarian families and celebrate New Year's a little bit more traditionally. When 12 o'clock hits we celebrate. We dance the traditional Bulgarian horo. And this year Kamen really enjoyed being part of that.
- Dad: It was very nice to see our kid bonding to a Bulgarian tradition. I was amazed to see how it resonated with him.
- Kamen: *Hello, I'm over here!*
- Mom: *Where is Kamen?*
- Kamen: *Mommy, up here!*
- Mom: *Where is Kamen?*
- Kamen: *Oh, I'm over here.*

Dad: Today we are the advocates for our child. He has to learn to be an advocate for himself. But I don't think he will be limited if he has the will to explore what he wants to explore.

Mom: Our experience with Listening and Spoken Language has been amazing.

Mom: My hopes and dreams for Kamen...

Mom: I hope my child gets a profession that he loves and challenges him. I hope he travels around the world. I hope he learns more languages. And I hope he has friends from all over the world.

[Coffee shop sounds]

Mom: *Good morning. How are you?*

Barista: *Good. How are you guys?*

Mom: Every Saturday morning, we like to go to have coffee in our favorite coffee shop.

Dad: I clearly remember the day when he walked in, he went straight to the cashier and said, "One croissant and one muffin for me please." And I was flabbergasted and very proud of him.

Kamen: *Look!*

Mom: *Oh, Thank you!*

Mom: *Are you going eat the whole thing?*

Kamen: *Yeah.*

Mom: *Do you want me to get the wrapper off from your muffin?*

Kamen: *I can do it.*

Mom: When you hear your child has a hearing loss diagnosis, you don't think that they're going to be independent and seeing how my child can just order whatever we wants— without my help, it's amazing.

