



LSL Life – CiCi

CiCi: My first dance class was when I was doing tap and I remember hearing my tap shoes and I was just moving my feet and moving my feet and I could just hear each sound I was making with my tap shoes.

CiCi: And with ballet, modern, jazz I love to hear the rhythm and I just love moving to the music.

CiCi: My name is Sylicia. Most people know me as CiCi, and I love to dance.

Mom: Music has always been a part of our lives.

Mom: We love jazz. We love hip hop. Gospel music. Classical music. You know, everything. And so it was really heartbreaking to get her diagnosis of deafness.

Mom: CiCi has profound sensorineural hearing loss in both ears.

Mom: We wanted her to be able to communicate with others and we just felt like her learning to talk was one of those avenues that was going to be able to help her be successful.

Mom: There really was an urgency to get her the right technology because the younger kids are you want to get as much language in as possible.

Mom: When I realized that she was pretty serious about dancing I started to sort of take a step back. And I thought I don't really know any professional deaf dancers.

Mom: I don't know any deaf dancers.

Mom: Does she really have a shot at this?

Mom: Who's going to take her serious? I don't want to let her continue doing this and set her up for failure.

Mom: Can she do this?

[Inspirational Music]

CiCi: So for our dance school we do three shows each year.

CiCi: The first show that we do in January is called *The Little Dancer* which is made up of ballet company.

CiCi: This year I danced the lead role and I felt very proud of myself because I was the first African American lead dancer.

Dad: I think that people who don't really know her, but they see her dance, they probably don't have any idea that she's deaf at all.

CiCi: My dance goals are to become a professional dancer in a contemporary ballet company.

Mom: Outside of her dance school she's also performed in a large musical theatre company.

Mom: And so, now I have no doubt, you know, that she can do this.

Mom: And people in the industry have been wonderful to her, very much encouraging her to keep going, because there's something special about her.

Mom: So now it's more so of what do we need to do to help you get there.

CiCi: My parents has taught me so many things and the most important thing that they taught me was about educating yourself and growing yourself.

Mom: Our parenting goals are basically centered around having a growth mindset and not wanting them to be fearful of failing.

- Dad: In the process of trying to teach her to self-advocate I think she's learned how to advocate for others as well, because she is so caring.
- Dad: So, she's gonna be the person in class that if she sees that someone is a little isolated, she's gonna try to make the person feel less isolated by getting to know them and befriending them.
- Mom: We are so thankful that we made the choice to have her learn to speak.
- Mom: And we would make that same decision all over again because her devices allow her to access music.
- Mom: I can't imagine this child without music. I mean it was the best thing for her. It was the best thing for our family.
- Dad: I can't imagine her taking this career path that she's on right now without having access to sound.
- CiCi: I'm so, so grateful that they chose this for me.
- CiCi: I would say to the little kids who are getting their cochlear implants and hearing aids, "Don't worry, don't worry at all. You're going to be just fine."