



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

# MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 2, 2011

Contact: Tom Christensen (619) 515-6535

## **CONFINED TO WHEELCHAIR FOR FIVE YEARS, TEEN TO WALK AT GRADUATION** *With the Help of his HHS Physical Therapist, 17-year-old to Participate in Ceremony with Peers*

**WHAT:** 17-year-old Jose Gildo was diagnosed with Lesch–Nyhan syndrome as an infant. The disease is characterized by severe self-mutilating behaviors and poor muscle control. Jose requires protective gear during all waking hours to prevent damage from self-mutilation as well as restraints at night time. He was confined to a wheelchair for more than 5 years.

In the fall of 2010, Rachael Chavez, a physical therapist with San Diego County's California Children Services (CCS) Medical Therapist Program, began working with Jose during weekly treatment sessions to try to find a way to improve Jose's quality of life. Rachael incurred many risks to her own body in working with a young adult with this severe uncontrollable motor disturbance, but she was dedicated to helping Jose move about on his own again.

Jose has benefited tremendously from active therapy services and is now able to walk with the assistance of a Meywalk gait trainer device. Rachael is planning to help Jose use this device to walk with peers during his high school graduation ceremony being held at Southwestern College.

**WHO:** **Rachael Chavez**, a Physical Therapist from the County of San Diego California Children Services (CCS) Medical Therapy Program.  
**Jose Gildo**, a graduating senior from Sweetwater High School, Chula Vista, CA.

**WHEN:** 5:00pm  
Friday June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011

**WHERE:** Southwestern College  
900 Otay Lakes Road  
Chula Vista, CA 91911

**WHY:** The California Children Services Medical Therapy Program is a special program of the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency that provides occupational therapy and physical therapy for children with eligible conditions such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy and spinal cord injuries. The program helps children and young adults overcome their disabilities so they can move as independently as possible around their communities and experience similar regular activities of daily living as their non-disabled peers.

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