

*My 12 year old son Jason was born 14 weeks premature. He had several complications due to his prematurity including a leg length discrepancy. His left leg is shorter than his right leg. Due to his disability, he swings his upper body back & forth to gain momentum to walk; which caused his scoliosis.*

*Jay has had several major orthopedic surgeries which took precedence over his scoliosis issues. When it was appropriate to focus on our options my husband & I were extremely worried that the bracing or the growing rods would be very painful for Jay because of the way he compensated for his discrepancy by swinging his back around. After all he had been through; we viewed the brace as cumbersome and torturous and no way for Jay to go through life.*

*My son's doctor, Dr. Michael Vitale of Columbia Presbyterian in NYC was excited to talk to us about vertebral stapling and explore the possibility for Jay. In all honesty, after trying to wrap our brains around the other options this seemed too good to be true. It turned out that due to the time that had passed because of Jay's prior surgeries; his curve had progressed too far to be a good candidate for the stapling only. Both his lumbar & thoracic curves were about 50 degrees. Dr. Vitale recommended that he perform hybrid surgery; growing rods and stapling. He patiently explained that the "hybrid" gave Jay a good chance for the rods to eventually come out, a chance for his curve to improve and most of all to avoid fusion.*

*In February 2008, Dr. Vitale implanted the growing rods. Jay was out of school for over a month recovering. In June 2008, Dr. Vitale performed the thoracic stapling. Jay was rock climbing a few weeks later. I was so excited to see him recover and thrive so quickly!!*

*At our last office visit with Dr. Vitale, Jay's x-ray showed that his thoracic curve has improved from 28 degrees to 22 degrees. Jay is scheduled for his lumbar stapling in April 2009. We are hopeful that the staples will continue to improve his curvature.*

*After a huge misstep with an orthopedic doctor when Jay was a baby, we luckily found Dr. Vitale and he has been Jay's doctor/surgeon for most of his life. He has been an absolute godsend to Jay and our family. I can't say enough about the level of care that Jay receives from Dr. Vitale and his staff.*

*Lisa Rezzonico 2/4/09*