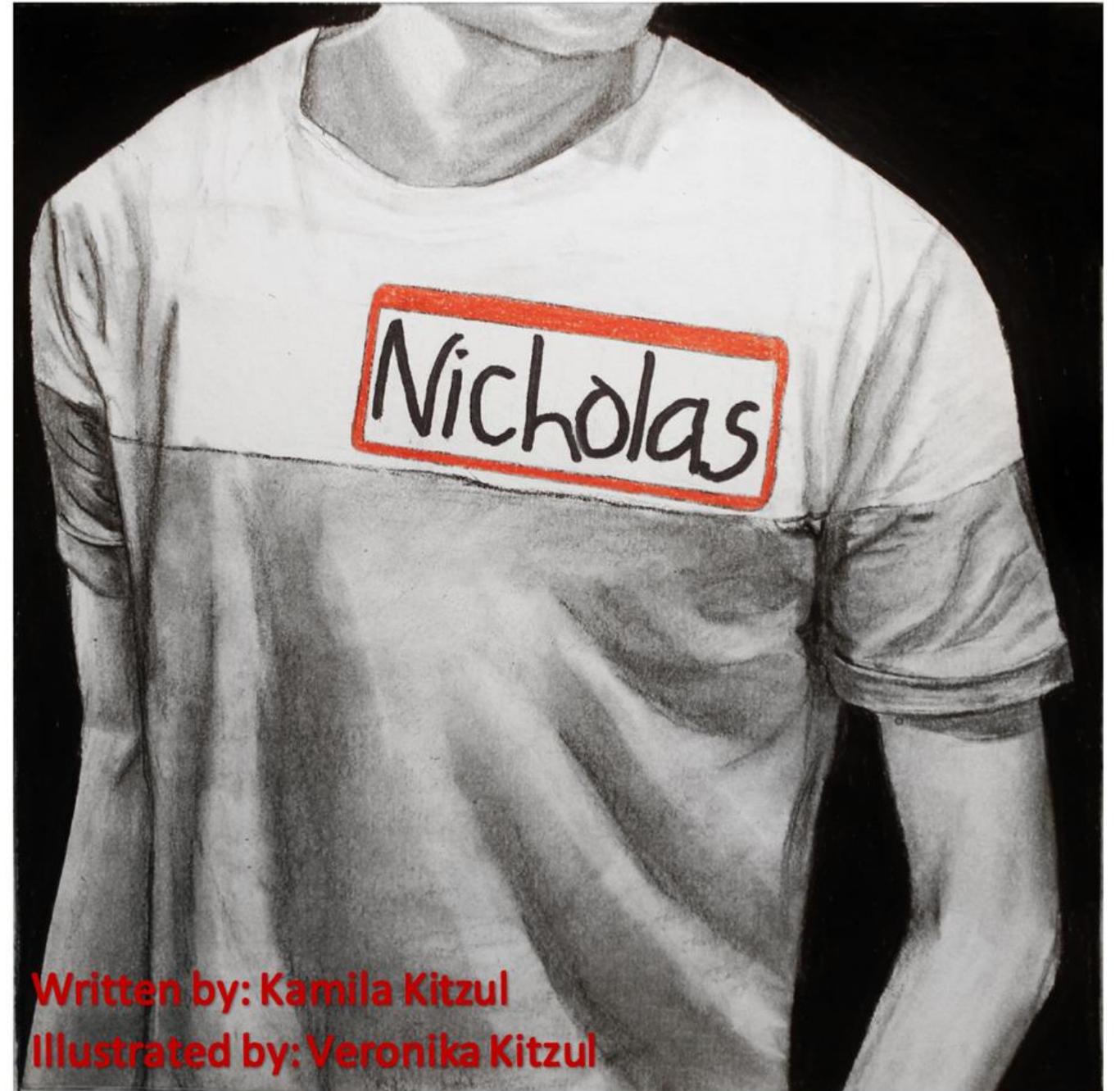


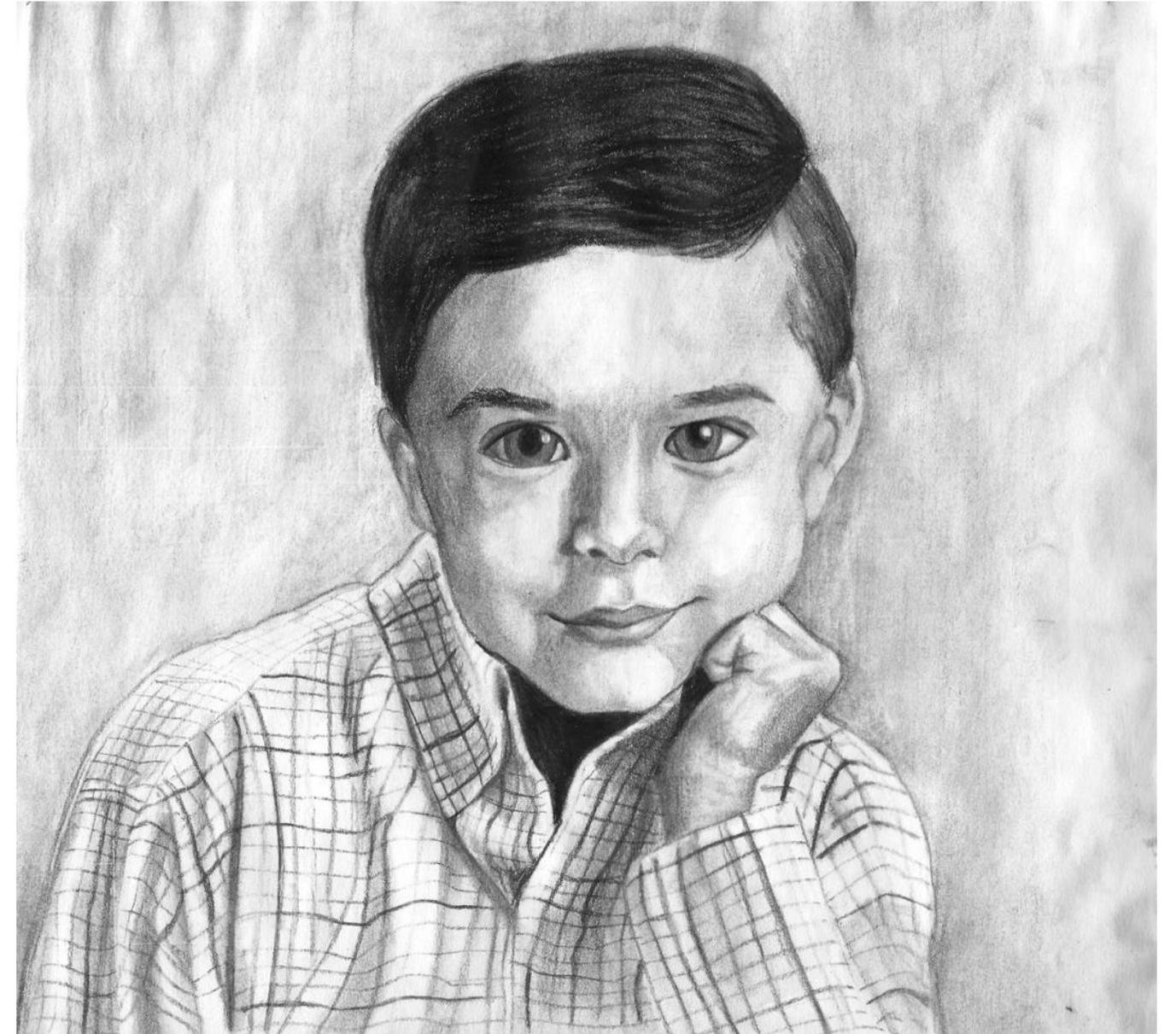
# His Name is



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This is a true story about an energetic boy named Nicholas.



As a young boy, Nicholas was very active. He played soccer, went swimming, rode his bike, ice skated and downhill skied. Nicholas would also go tobogganing on any hill his family could find. He was even exploring the game of golf. Along with being an avid “sportsman”, he earned good grades in school and he was an accomplished reader. One of Nicholas’ favorite topics was learning about weather systems. It’s no surprise then, that his favorite subjects were Physical Education and Science. Like many young boys, playing outside with his friends was probably his favorite thing to do.



When Nicholas was eight years old, he had a terrible accident, and had to spend four months in the hospital. The accident injured his brain and he was unable to walk, talk, use his arms, or see properly. This is called an intellectual disability because it makes it harder for Nicholas to learn and communicate with others. Intellectual disabilities can happen from birth complications, illness, or in Nicholas' case, an accident.



Since Nicholas had to use a wheelchair every day, people would stare at him and it would make him very sad. Even though he had to use special equipment, he was the same boy on the inside with a fun personality. Nicholas and his family worked very hard to regain his abilities. He spent many hours going to rehabilitation appointments and doing physical therapy. Nicholas often did not want to do his exercises, but listening to his favorite music always made it better.



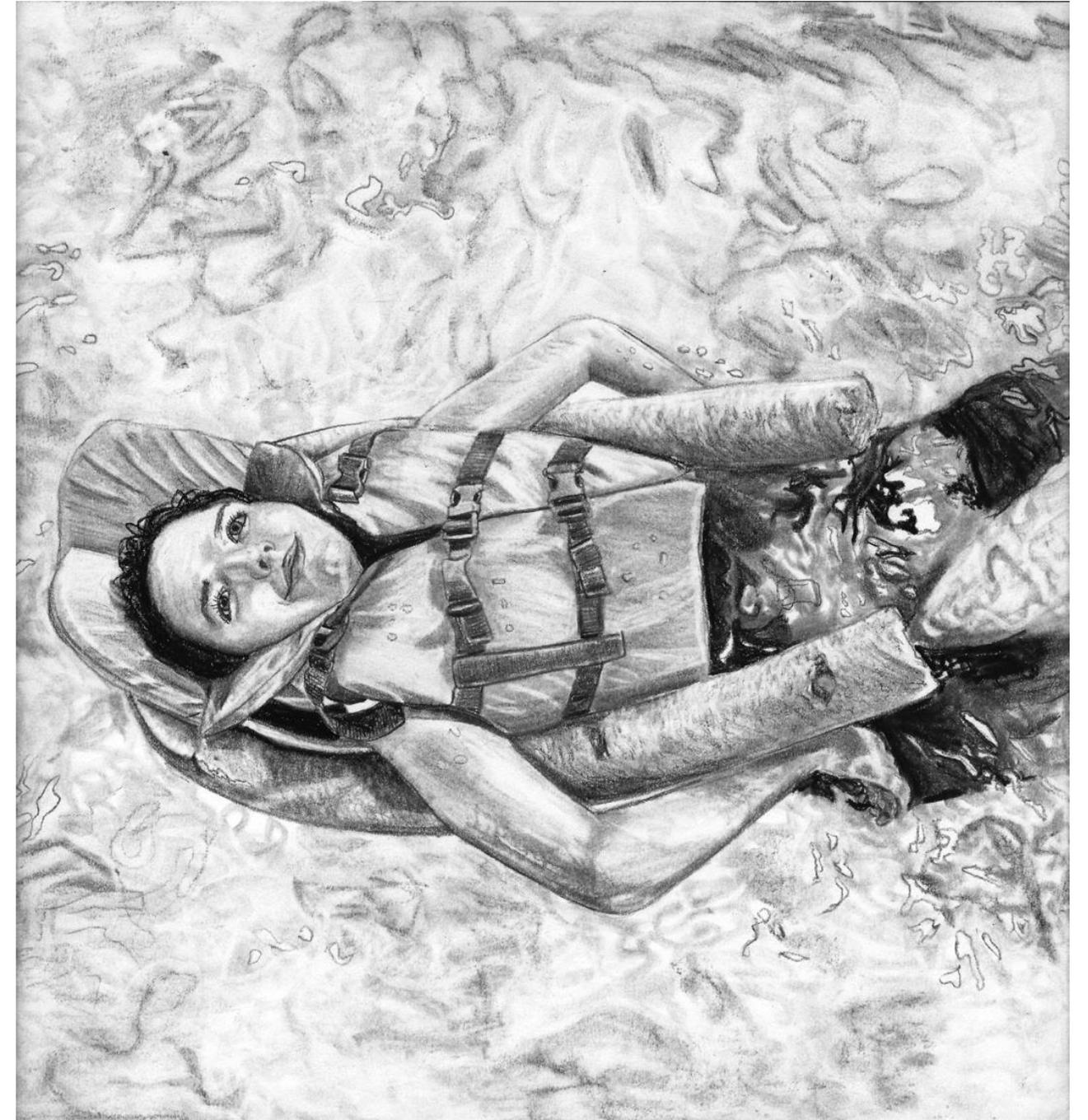
Nicholas can still enjoy many of the things he used to do, but he needs some adaptive equipment. He uses a special ski called a sit-ski and a trained guide steers him down the slopes. Nicholas likes to go fast, just like he did before!



In the winter he enjoys skating on the frozen lake with his brother and sister. He has mini-skis that attach to the front wheels of his wheelchair and he loves being pushed on the ice. A few years after the accident, Nicholas was able to receive a service dog. His dog is a yellow Labrador and he is Nicholas' best friend.



Nicholas loves swimming! He has powerful legs which are great for kicking and splashing anyone that is close to him. Nicholas finds it especially funny when he gets his mom's hair all wet. Bike riding has remained one of his favorite activities when the weather is sunny and warm. He uses a special adaptive cycle with three wheels which allows him to travel with some independence around the neighborhood.



Nicholas understands just about everything although he only speaks a few words. Living with a brain injury, he sometimes feels trapped in a body that doesn't do what he wants it to do. Nicholas is a person like you and me. So, if you ever meet Nicholas or anyone with a different ability, it's okay to say, "Hello". Remember, everyone deserves kindness and wants to be included.



controls your entire body; with a brain injury it might be harder to speak or use your arms and legs.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What is a brain injury?
2. What is an intellectual disability?
3. What activities do you like to do? How could someone in a wheelchair participate?
4. What does “rehabilitation” mean?
5. How could you include someone with a different ability in your favorite sport or activity?
6. What makes you curious about someone in a wheelchair or with a different ability?
7. Do you know anybody that uses a wheelchair or has a different ability?
8. How would you speak to someone with an intellectual disability?

### **DISCUSSION NOTES:**

#### What is a brain injury?

Just like you can break a bone or scrape an elbow, your brain can also be hurt. Your brain can get injured if you hit it really hard, or if it doesn't get all the oxygen/air that it needs (eg. if you stop breathing for too long). Unfortunately, the brain can take a much longer time to heal. Your brain

#### What is an intellectual disability?

An intellectual disability occurs when a person has a hard time with communication, social skills, or self-care. Learning might be more difficult or they might learn in a different way. They may also talk or move differently. Intellectual disabilities are very common. There are many causes and it can happen to anyone. With Nicholas, he acquired an intellectual disability when he was in an accident that injured his brain. For other people, they are born with an intellectual disability, or get sick and develop one. Either way, everyone deserves to be included.

#### What does rehabilitation mean?

Rehabilitation is care and exercises that are meant to improve the abilities that you need for daily life. For example, Nicholas uses a walking device that helps him learn to walk again- this is part of his rehabilitation.

#### How would you speak with someone with an intellectual disability?

Speak with them like you would anyone else. Look them in their eyes, say hello, and ask questions to get to know them. You should also listen to them with your ears and eyes. Once you find out what they're interested in, you'll probably learn that you're not that different.



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