While progress seems slow, much has happened with Brittney Ferguson, 19, since her automobile accident in Wyoming Sept. 25.

It has now nearly been one month since she was moved to Craig Hospital, and her parents Rance and Connie and 17-year-old sister Amanda stay close by. Brittney's mom, Connie, gave an update Sunday, Dec. 14, which follows:

"Well, we are approaching the one-month mark of Brittney being at Craig Hospital. She now has been on every hallway of the floor as she has had a new room every week! She just got moved again Friday. As everyone progresses from stage to stage, they have to move people around to be compatible with each other. Brittney is starting to become more vocal and letting people know she is here, so it is hard for others to rest and visa versa with the other patients there.

"When we see Brittney every day, sometimes the progress is hard to realize. But when we look back at where she was when she arrived at Craig to the progress she has made, it does make us feel good

"When Brittney was admitted she was considered a stage 3, and now she is considered a stage 4 with some pieces of a stage 5.

"So Brittney has moved up in the scale. Her movements are becoming more purposeful where there is a thought behind it, and not just a reflex that your body does without thought like yawning.

"Brittney had a cast on her left arm to begin with to help with the spasticity and muscle tone. They kept that cast on for a full week. She was supposed to have it taken off Dec. 8, but her injections for that arm were postponed so they kept it on longer, which cause her to wear a small sore on her elbow.

"She had her right arm cast on Dec. 8, so for two days she was casted on both arms; she didn't like that very much. Anyway, last weekend Amanda and I had a pack of markers laying on her lap and we were decorating her cast and she reached over with her right hand and took the marker from me, put it in the empty slot in the package and closed the package. I guess we were done drawing.

"Those are purposeful movements. She moves pretty slowly, but she does get there. She likes to create piles of things like if you hold a box of Kleenex in front of her she can pull some out and she lays them in a pile and if you take the pile she doesn't like that, or if she grabs things, she likes to have them right there. The other day Rance was drinking his diet Dew and she reached up and grabbed the can and pulled it towards her mouth.

"The main response to everything is crying, or a grimace look, but there has been a few smiles thrown in there randomly. Some days she just totally amazes everyone, and some days she, like everyone, has a bad day. The main thing is she is gaining slowly which feels like a snail's pace, but it is in the right direction.

"They are working hard with her to try to get her to communicate consistently in some fashion. They have an eye gaze board, which is basically a file folder with the center cut out, and they put yes on one side and no on the other and trying to get her to pick a yes or no to questions using her eye. They have a paper with yes and no written on it and are trying to get her to point to the correct response.

"They start out with questions we all know the answer to like "is your name Brittney," "is your sister's name Amanda." Sometimes she does so great with that and other times it is inconsistent. The other day the therapist had a photo of Brittney and Josi Kramer at graduation.

"She asked Brittney "is this picture you and Jamie?" She pointed to no. Then she asked "is

this picture Jamie and you?" She pointed to no. She then asked "is this picture you and Josi?" She pointed to yes. And she asked again, "is this picture Josi and you," and she pointed to yes.

"They ask the questions twice, contrasting it a bit to make sure she isn't just randomly picking an answer. We work on asking things like "do you want to get in your chair" and "do you want to get out of bed." Once she is able to communicate that way consistently and so we know she understands, then it is easier to know if she is hurting or is frustrated.

"They also work with her on visual things. They will ask her "where is your sister" and she has to look around the room for her. She usually finds Amanda the quickest and responds to Amanda well. The therapist says she will respond to things better that have an emotional value, such as pictures, so I will be going through pictures to find more and something new for her to look at. The ones that have one or two people in it are the best so there isn't a ton of things to focus on.

"So if anyone has any photos they want to share, please feel free to send them up and write a description of it on the back! We don't know what that one stimuli will be that will spark her to make things click. It could be a song, a photo, a story. That is why I ask for your stories, your photos and songs you know she liked, because it could be anything and it may be something we aren't aware of!

"She will most likely have a barium swallow test done this week to make sure her swallow is good and she isn't getting things in her lungs. The therapist has been giving her some things like ice chips and she has tried pureed strawberries, which Brittney really liked, and juice and diet Dew that was thickened.

"They said to not be surprised if she isn't saying some things and maybe eating some things by Christmas! That is a hard concept for us. We know what she was like before the accident and we know that the accident has forever changed her, so it is hard to imagine what she will be like when her long recovery is done. We put our faith in God's hands and pray for the best.

"So what we see today is what we see. It is hard to imagine what it will be weeks, months or even a year from now. We still have our miracle we pray for every day. We are so grateful for the prayers and know that she is progressing because of them! So thank you again.

"As the therapists have said, we may not be able to measure things from day to day, but on a weekly or monthly basis. So we take one day at a time and thank God for every day!"