

# Lifted by the Kindness of Others

BY DEBORAH KUCH

May 20, 2015 is a date my family is not likely to forget. That is the day Tualatin Police Officer Mark Waddell arrived at our door around 9:30 pm. He made sure I was not alone when he shared the news that our youngest son Kyle had been struck by an SUV while in a cross walk on Boones Ferry Rd. He told me that Kyle had suffered a severe head injury and was on the way to OHSU to the trauma ICU and assuring me that he was going to the best place for care. I knew immediately by his face and tone that this was very serious. Kyle's father Tony was in California on business and would not get a flight home until the morning.

Upon arrival at OHSU I was informed that Kyle had suffered many injuries but the most pressing was internal bleeding due to an aortic dissection to which he needed immediate surgery for repair. The family waited for hours in the ICU trauma waiting room for word from the staff. When we did get notified the news was good. He had survived the surgery and they had repaired the aorta and stopped the bleeding.

It was only one month later that we learned from one of the ICU doctors that Kyle had beat the odds on surviving this injury. We were told that 80% of the patients die at the scene of the accident. Then of the 20% that make it to the operating room many of those don't survive the surgery.

The other major injury Kyle suffered was a Traumatic Brain Injury. This too can be

life threatening and there were many scary moments over the course of his 19 day stay in ICU. Once he was stable enough to leave the ICU, he was transferred to the trauma floor until he was strong enough for rehabilitation.

Due to the aortic tear Kyle suffered blood loss to his spinal cord. Unfortunately that injury has left Kyle a paraplegic. He has spent the last 2 months at Randall's Children's Hospital for rehabilitation getting stronger each day. He has spent many exhausting days in Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy and Speech/Neuro Therapy. He was discharged on Aug. 14th. Out-patient therapies will continue probably for another year at Meridian Park Rehabilitation.

This has certainly been a roller coaster of emotions over the last 3 months. We are obviously so happy that Kyle is still with us. Our family would not be complete without him. Life for us will be quite different as we figure out our new normal and Kyle learns to navigate life using a wheelchair.

I wanted to take the opportunity to speak on behalf of the family to say how blessed we feel to live in Oregon and especially the city of Tualatin. We have had such an outpouring of support from so many people. I realized very early what a wonderful city we live in. The first night Police Officer Brian Stubbs was with us in the waiting room to get information for his report. He was kind and patient, waiting until I was ready to share information. He stayed



Door with hearts : Our front door was adorned with hearts of well wishes and love from our LDS congregation.



Tony, Kyle & Deborah Kuch at Kyle's graduation ceremony from Tualatin High School in 2014.

for hours and when he left in the morning he gave me his card and told me to call anytime. I was also told that the whole department was praying for my son and that the chief of police asked the officer to give me a hug on his behalf. I was brought to tears.

Over the last 3 months I have been brought to tears on many other occasions. When we were inundated by phone calls and emails inquiring about Kyle's status and offers of help I cried. A few days after the accident our front door was adorned with hearts of well wishes and love from our LDS congregation. It was an overwhelming sight to see. Again tears. On our return home we pulled up to two big Welcome Home signs again from our LDS friends. We have had so many acts of service displayed to us. There have been meals, lawn care, gifts, cards and thousands of prayers. The most surprising have been from people we hardly know. One example is a woman in my husband's running group who doesn't even know us offered to make us a meal when she heard about our situation.

We are in the process of making our home accessible to Kyle. When our neighbor Jagroop (Jay) Malhi found out that our house would need renovating in order to accommodate Kyle in a wheelchair he said, "Just tell me what you want done and I'll take care of it." Jay contacted Jonathan Crane and through Jay's business contacts and Jon's contacts through his work at Tualatin Life, they were able to put together a team of contractors and trades specialists who volunteered their time to convert our den/laundry room into an ADA bedroom/bathroom. There is no way to adequately thank them for this incredible service. They are not only sacrificing their personal time but also time where their businesses could be making money. I hope that the saying 'what goes around, comes around' is true and that they are blessed for their extreme kindness.

I wish I could remember all the kindnesses shown to our family and thank everyone individually but that is impossible. Just know that every act has helped us through an incredibly hard time and we are forever grateful.