

November 16, 2005 – December 20, 2006
Kessler Rehab Continued, Coaching Hockey and Visiting Colleges

November 16, 2005

Hello everyone,

Well, another new adventure to write about. This past weekend, Darren & I drove to Bristol, CT for a Quad Rugby tournament. We drove up Friday night, and he had two games on Saturday and two games on Sunday. His team is the NY Jets, and is sponsored by the United Spinal Association and the NFL Jets. The whole team was staying at the same hotel. On Saturday, they played the two teams from Philadelphia. They are both really good teams, and they lost by a lot. But Darren got some playing time in each game. He knew not to expect much playing time, since he is new to the team, and not a strong player yet, so he was happy to play the few minutes he was in. On Sunday, their first opponent (Maine) only had three players, so the NY team split up, and all of the players got more playing time. At any one time, each team has 4 players on the court - basketball court - but they switch in and out to get breaks. Well, some of the better, stronger players play the whole game. But, you still need more than 3! Anyway, Darren got more playing time because of that, so it was good. And unbeknownst to the spectators (at least me!), the second game didn't count because two of the players on the opponent's team had illegal chairs (you can't believe the requirements and restrictions that are spelled out for equipment!). But they wanted to play the game anyway, so NY won by default. So, again, Darren got a bit more playing time than he might have otherwise.

In between games, the tournament sponsors provided lunch, and we just hung out and socialized. The tournament was held at a place called New Horizons Village, an independent living facility for disabled adults. It was a very nice facility, and observing the people living there gave me new appreciation for health and independence. I saw a lot of people with very serious and complex disabilities, but here they were, living on their own (some with varying amounts of help, I'm sure), socializing and enjoying their free time.

The team all had dinner together at the hotel Saturday night, and while the restaurant had difficulty making such a large number of dinners all at one time, we made the best of it, talking and getting to know the team members and their families. What a great group of people.

(If you want to know more about quad rugby, you can check out the recent film "Murderball" that was out this past summer.)

When we arrived at the hotel on Friday night, we passed a large complex with a LOT of satellite dishes. Knowing we were in Bristol, we knew it had to be ESPN. The hotel clerk confirmed our guess, and I got right on the computer to e-mail a high school friend of mine who had worked at ESPN a long time. I wasn't sure if he still worked there, but I knew he did at our last high school reunion 4 years ago. Sure enough, I heard back from Stu Sisco on Sunday morning, and he arranged for me and Darren to have our own personal tour. It was awesome! We got to see control rooms, editing rooms, production studios, even the SportsCenter set. That was really cool, and I've attached a picture to this update. Hopefully you all can get it. Stu gave us lots of background and info on what we were seeing, and I was just amazed at the amount of technology in those buildings. A lot of people don't realize that everything ESPN broadcasts is done right in Bristol, CT. It is a pretty big place, and they are making it even bigger. Needless to say, Darren was more than able to keep up his end of the conversation with Stu about sports, statistics, and broadcasting, so it was a great experience. Darren recognized Michael Erwin (Irwin? Irvin? I was too embarrassed to ask "who") who walked by us, and we saw Mike Ditka broadcasting from the radio show booth. All in all, it was a pretty neat experience. Thank you, Stu!

Darren then proceeded to sleep most of the ride home!

After my last update, I received quite a few e-mails, and I apologize for not writing back to some of you personally. Be assured that I do read them all and appreciate hearing from you. I do try to write back as much as I can, but sometimes e-mails are low on the list of things to do. I trust that you understand.

So that is our news of late. This might be my last update before Thanksgiving, so I wish all of friends and their families a very happy, joyful Thanksgiving. I know I will be giving thanks for all that I have and am so grateful for.

With love and prayers,

Cynthia

December 2, 2005

Hello Everyone!

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving. We had a very nice day with family and friends, enjoying each other's company and eating a lot! Of course! But we have so much to be thankful for, and while I try to be thankful EVERY day, it is nice to have special day to do just that.

Now onto the Christmas season! We decorated the house the day after Thanksgiving, and realizing we just didn't have enough decorations (haha), Ari & I did some shopping for more on Saturday. So now the house is decked out and ready for the celebrations. I love this whole time of the year. Family, friends, parties, gifts - all of it! It can be stressful as well, so I try to be careful to balance it all out and enjoy it before its over.

I feel badly that I forgot an important item in my last update. When Darren & I were in CT for the quad rugby tournament, his friend Kate Crowell and her friend, Jen, drove over from Quinnipiac to watch Darren's game on Saturday, and then stayed to have dinner with us Saturday night. They even came back to watch Sunday's game! It was really great to have them there, and Darren took a fair amount of ribbing from the other guys since he had TWO cute girls who came to see him. So, thanks Kate and Jen! I've attached a picture of the three of them.

This e-mail will be a short one (I think!), but am happy to pass on some wonderful news. Darren continues to work out with his trainer 3 times a week, usually 3 hours each time. Well, if all goes well, he uses the spin bike twice a week, and now he is able to pedal himself several minutes at a time, in several short spurts! It is labor intensive - it takes 3 of us to help him on, get his feet in the pedals and straps, position himself, keep his feet in, and move his legs. Then after his legs have been pushed for a bit, he starts pedaling by himself. It is so awesome! Its usually his shoulders that give out first, they get so tired holding him up. So he'll take a break by sitting upright, then go at it again. He does this usually three times. Sometimes his legs don't want to "cooperate" and have spasms, or pull into the center too much, but Darren and Eric are figuring out what to do beforehand so his legs are "ready" for the bike. So each time is getting more productive.

Also, there has been some new movement in one of his hip flexors, and his ankles. It is sporadic and inconsistent, but its there! We can see that healing continues to happen, very, very slowly, but happening nonetheless. And his trunk/core muscles, abs and back are all getting stronger, too. So with all that is happening, we are even more anxious to go back to Project Walk, and see what happens during Darren's month of treatment there. I'll keep you posted.....If you haven't checked out their website, it's

www.projectwalk.org. You can click on Client Locator, then find "Darren T" in the first column of Phase I & II. Its a short, but very cool video.

Classes at Ramapo are going well. Darren continues to obsess over his grades, just like he did in high school! He is still very conscientious, and committed to getting good grades. And that is a good thing.

Tonight, he and I will drive to Ursinus College in PA for a quad rugby game. Then we have a Devils game tomorrow afternoon, and a Giants game on Sunday. I look forward to all of the activity!

With continued love, prayers and hope,

Cynthia

December 22, 2005

Hello Everyone, I hope this finds you all ready for Christmas and Hanukkah by now. Only a few days to go!

Darren has finished his exams at Ramapo, and now has one full semester successfully completed tucked under his belt. I am so proud of him and all that he accomplished this semester. Going to and from school by himself, managing his academic requirements, navigating the campus and the parking (always a challenge), making friends - all part of a typical college experience, but with the added difficulty of being in a wheelchair. But that didn't deter Darren one bit. Since he prefers to be in his manual wheelchair for a variety of reasons, most of the time he drives from his power chair (which is the only way he can drive right now, although he is considering options to change that in the near future) and brings his manual chair with him. When he arrives at campus, he transfers into his manual chair and spends his day in that. When he leaves campus, he asks for help to get back into the van - he can't quite get up the ramp himself - reverses the transfer and drives himself home. He has even gone back to campus for small group meetings on days and times he doesn't have class. He is anxious to get his grades, and see how he did - still obsessing over his grades like he's always done. That hasn't changed!

So a little down time during Christmas break, although he still has his workouts with Eric, staying strong before going back to Project Walk in California. We leave (just he and I) on December 30, and we'll be there for the whole month of January. Everything is in place now - flights (flying direct this time), hotel, Project Walk schedule, etc. We shipped out the van we first used to transport Darren around in before he started driving, because that was more cost effective than renting an accessible van out there. Hopefully, I'll be able to sell it out there, and not worry about shipping it back to NJ. We'll see.

If you haven't had a chance to check out Project Walk yet, their website is www.projectwalk.org. It is a pretty easy site to navigate through, and you'll see some amazing stories on what they and their clients have accomplished. If you go to "client video locator" and click on Darren T. in the Phase I & II section, you'll see Darren's video that was made in September. He's hoping he can expand upon that during his time there in January. I look forward to being in that positive atmosphere again, where they encourage and support your efforts to strengthen yourself, motivate yourself, and do ALL that you can do, and then some! It will be good, hard work! As for me, I intend to join a gym and do some things for myself while Darren is at the facility. While I was there with him for the entire time during our week in September (videotaping and learning), I won't be doing that this time, so will have some free time. Then we'll see how we can keep ourselves busy and occupied the rest of the time. I look forward to the whole trip - the

possibilities and opportunities that Project Walk presents, free time to do things I want to do, and time for me and Darren to be together. And who could complain about the weather in southern California in January?!

Off the topic a bit - but as this is a great way to communicate with so many of you that I would not normally get to talk with personally - I shall use it to broadcast a bit of news from Arianne - she has been offered early decision acceptance to Ithaca College in NY, her first (and only!!) choice. Yea!!! I am so proud of her! She has been accepted into their Physical Therapy program (a new area of interest for her since Darren's injury) which is a 6 year Doctorate program. So that was good news last week - a great Christmas present!

As the holiday season fast approaches, and will be over in the blink of an eye, I wish all of you a wonderful Christmas, a happy Hanukkah, and a happy and healthy New Year. May you enjoy your time with family and friends, be thankful for all the wonderful people and things in your lives, and celebrate all of the special accomplishments that this past year has brought. I am counting my blessings for Darren's healing and recovery, for all of you who have been with us from the beginning, and for your continued care and concern. May the holiday season bring peace, hope and Faith to all of us during the coming year. May God bless us all.

Love Cynthia

January 5, 2006

We arrived in California, safe and sound, with just some turbulence and bumps during the flight. It was so much easier this time, flying direct. When we arrived, our friend Al was there to pick us up at the airport. He already had our bags and the van was waiting. As we headed to the Marriott Residence Inn in Carlsbad, he told me that his wife, Linda, was picking up some groceries for us and would meet us at the hotel. What a wonderful way to arrive, with friends there to meet us and think of the little things that really make a difference. It was a great start!

On Saturday, New Year's Eve, we just took it easy during the day, since it was crummy weather, and we knew it would be a late night. I had to take care of a few minor repairs on the van, so it took some time to figure that out. We met Al and Linda at a very nice restaurant for dinner, then went back to their house to hang out until midnight. It was a nice, quiet evening with the celebratory champagne at 12. At least we were with friends, and not alone in the hotel!

On New Year's Day, we headed to meet new friends, a family who used to live in Kinnelon and now live in Carlsbad, of all places! A mutual friend put us in touch with Tania and Kevin Hurt, and we had a wonderful afternoon with them and their two boys. It was a very nice day, with a delicious dinner, and talking about mutual friends and acquaintances from town. I'm sure we'll be seeing more of them during our month here.

Monday brought Darren's first session at Project Walk, and we were glad to be back and see familiar faces, especially his trainer, Margarita. Darren worked hard, showing her all of the improvements he's made in the past 3 months, and then they talked about what he wanted to accomplish during the upcoming month. I stayed there in the lobby, but was not part of the session. Afterwards, he seemed very

happy to be back, and was ready to begin his month of hard work. He is even trying to add a few hours, so he goes 2 hours a day, 5 times a week (instead of 4 times a week). After his session, we went to Danky's, a sports bar, to watch some of the college bowl games that Darren has been following.

I dropped Darren off at Project Walk for his session, then I headed back to the hotel to use the treadmill and hot tub. After I picked him up, we had lunch, did some grocery shopping and then I had to wait 4 hours for the van to be repaired. But at last it was finished!

Wednesday brought an earlier session at Project Walk, so we can head north to the Rose Bowl. We didn't have tickets, but our friends did, and we were hopeful that we might be able to buy some. We never did get any tickets, but we did have a great time tailgating and watching the game on a TV in the back of Al's truck! Al and one son were inside watching, Darren, Mark (Al's other son) and I stayed in the parking lot. Quite a crowd gathered around us and the TV, and it was a lot of fun. Even the traffic in and out wasn't bad, but the fact that USC lost was disappointing. I didn't care too much myself, but Al is a HUGE USC fan, and Darren had a bet on it. Oh well. It was fun anyway.

Today was a day off, and we went to another SCI rehab place called Awakenings in Solana Beach, only 20 minutes south. It was started by a woman who worked at Project Walk previously, along with her partner who is a "walking" recovered quad herself. We wanted to check it out, and see what it was all about. You can see it online at www.awakeningsinstitute.org.

Well, enough of my "dairy" for now. As I see more of what Darren is doing at Project Walk, I can write more then. What I can tell you is that as often as possible, in between using the various pieces of equipment, Margarita gets Darren up to stand. It is quite difficult, and requires 2 trainers, but he is able to do it for a few seconds. Sometimes he is holding onto something or someone, but the idea is there. Again the philosophy of re-training the brain, and getting the muscles to remember what they used to do. Good stuff!!

Speaking of good stuff, I will soon be posting new updates on Darren's website that he has up and running. It's not finished yet, but he says to check out his work in progress at www.darrentempleton.com. So in the near future, you can check the website for the latest updates, instead of getting them via e-mail. Darren has set it up himself and is designing it all on his own, a good project for our down time here in California.

By the way, it rained our first few days here, but I'm happy to say that it is warm and sunny now, just as southern California is supposed to be! It's wonderful! That's all for now. I'll write more soon!

With love, hope and prayers for more recovery,

Cynthia

January 12, 2006

Hi everyone, greetings again from Carlsbad, California! The weather here has still been wonderful, warm and sunny. This weekend its supposed to rain, but hopefully the sun will return soon!

The picture I've attached is from New Year's Eve.

I have to correct some mistakes from my last email. You know how the newspapers bury their corrections on a tiny corner of page 7 somewhere? Well, not me. Mine are front and center!

The first apology to AI, who was so insulted (jokingly) that I referred to his beautiful Infiniti automobile as a "truck." Well, I meant to write that we were watching a TV in the back of his "trunk" so even spell-check didn't pick up my mistake. Sorry, AI!

Second, the website for the other rehab place we went to check out in Solana Beach was "www.awakeningshealthinstitute.org." I left part of that out last time. Sorry.

We have been busy since our last update, and I'll try to give you a summary of our activities - we had a nice bonfire, oops I mean barbeque, at the Wilson's last Friday. His grill was just a wee bit stronger than I'm used to, and when I placed the chicken on it, the flames were out of control! But it turned out OK, and we had a nice dinner. Didn't we, AI??? We went to the movies to see "Munich," had an entertaining and filling sushi dinner, with the Wilsons, of course (is anyone seeing a pattern here? Eating? With the Wilsons?), rented a few movies, and Darren is catching up on past episodes of The Sopranos so he is ready for the new season in March. Yesterday, we took a very nice 2 hour boat cruise of San Diego Bay, then ate at Anthony's right on the water. It was really nice, and good food, too.

Today I went to Project Walk with Darren so I could take some short video clips for him to put on his website. So look for them in the near future. I have asked Darren if I could have a "Mom's Page," and he said "you do, the updates." But I want more than that! So if anyone out there wants to support my cause, e-mail him and tell him so! (darrentempleton@optonline.net) Thanks! I am very proud of him for putting that all together, and look forward to future ideas and additions. Linda Wilson came to observe, today, too, and she was quite impressed with the facility, the equipment, trainers, and of course, Darren's hard work. With all the pictures and videos, there's nothing quite like seeing it for yourself.

This week, I went for an hour long Swedish massage at a nearby spa, and boy, was it wonderful! I'm going back for a facial next week! So the money I saved by not joining a gym (since I use the treadmill at the hotel) is getting spent anyway. And it feels good, too!!

Tonight we are going to see King Kong, and tomorrow I'll head to Carlsbad Beach for a nice long walk while Darren is at training. Then we'll head to the Wilson's for - what else? - dinner! What would we do without them???

Each day at Project Walk, we see the results of healing, hard work and miracles in the clients there. No one knows which of those three things helps these people walk, but it gives us so much hope. It is such a positive place, with people telling you that you CAN do it, that good things are bound to happen. Darren is doing the hard work, now we have to pray for continued healing and recovery - our very own miracle. I know you are praying with and for us, and for that I am very grateful. Thank you.

Staying strong in California, with love,

Cynthia

January 19, 2006

Hello All,

There is a special guest writer for this update. Yes, I, Darren will in fact be informing you of our recent activities.

We've been pretty busy out here, taking advantage of the weather and free time. Our recent activities include going to the Wilson's this past weekend to watch some football, checking out the mall, going to some museums and eating in San Diego, and going to the movies. We're planning on going to see San Diego's minor league hockey game this Friday.

The rehab at Project Walk is going really well. I'm getting a chance to use some unique equipment that allows us to find out more about what I've gained and what I need to work on. There is always plenty of help around so it is never a problem to try something new that may require additional help in the beginning. We've been trying to hit every part of my body hard since strength throughout my body is essential to progress. We've been moving from arms, to abs, to back, to legs pretty fast to keep everything in shape and active. Some of the things I've been doing are continuing to use the bike, standing holding on to something, partial squats in the standing frame, and a whole lot of other exercises. We're concentrating on using equipment I won't be able to use at home, as well as figuring out changes I can make to my home workout program.

Project Walk is a pretty busy place, and a lot of their clients have made tremendous progress. Whenever I get discouraged or doubt myself, all I have to do watch some of the other people in the gym. There is almost always someone walking across the room, maybe holding onto a walker or with the support of some trainers, but they're doing it. They were once where I was, but have stuck with it long enough to get to that point. Sometimes it gets really tough, and it's sooooooo slow, but I've made progress and refuse to stop. I know I'll make it eventually.

This Monday will be 1½ years since the injury. It's been a long 18 months, but I've come a pretty long way and at the pace I'm going I hopefully won't need my chair in another 18 months. I don't want to set a timeline, but that would be a realistic goal. Things will never be like they once were but with a lot of hard work I can put this whole thing behind me. I thank you all for your support and interest in my progress.

This in fact will be the last update sent in the mail. All of the updates will be posted on my site, www.DarrenTempleton.com. We plan on sending out an email letting you know an update has been posted, with a direct link to it. Since the last email I have put a bunch of new things up on the site including video, all the old updates, a page about a cure, and some changes to the other pages as well. Thanks again for the support and take care.

Darren

February 23, 2006

Hello Everyone,

Now that you're getting an update, I'm sure you're all thinking - well, it's about time! It has been awhile, hasn't it? I apologize for that, and will try to get everything in here without writing a novel!

Well, it's good to be home, back together as a family, and getting settled into a routine of a new year, new school semester for Darren, and preparing for the last half of Ari's senior year of high school. A lot going on!

Since coming back home, Darren has been able to maintain his workouts here with Eric, back to three times a week. He also uses the standing frame quite a bit, and is starting to use his "e-stim" unit more, also. He got back into that while we were in California, mostly stimulating his abs. But he wants to use it for his legs, too. It's good for getting the muscles going and for strengthening them, too. He also bought a chin-up kind of bar that goes into the door frame, to assist him with standing. Instead of mounting it high like you would need for chin-ups, its mid-level, and he uses it to pull himself up and stand. He needs 2 people to get him up and block and spot him, but once he's up, he can hold himself for a few minutes at a time. While standing, he tries to maintain good posture and trunk balance. As he does this more often, he'll get stronger and more balanced, and will then be able to stand unassisted for longer periods of time. At only \$25, this piece of equipment was a bargain!! And a very productive one to use.

So his current routine is about 3 hours per session, with work on the mat, Total Gym, floor exercises, standing and spin bike. Eric could really see the difference when Darren returned from Project Walk, so that was very encouraging. He continues to do "squats" on the Total Gym, like he did in California, and is able to control his leg movements on a fairly consistent basis. All good stuff!

We are talking now about returning to Project Walk for 3-4 weeks this summer. When, who, how - all details that need a lot of advance planning. I'm hoping that if we start the process early enough, we can figure out a trip that makes sense for all of us. We're hoping that Eric wants to continue his training at Project Walk as well, so he will be part of the planning and traveling, too.

Darren found out about a clinical trial going on at Children's Hospital in Mountainside that involves use of a "stim bike." He has gone twice now for evaluations and will start using the bike twice a week (I think). He has done all of the research, talking to the people involved, making the appointments, etc. himself. All I know is that use of a stim bike for SCI patients has been getting a lot of attention lately, and some good results are being seen. Since a bike like this costs about \$15,000. and requires training for home use, being able to use one at a facility with trained staff, at no cost, is an excellent way to start using one. The premise is that you are hooked up to the bike with stimulation pads placed on the legs, and the electric current, in low doses, makes the muscles contract, thereby turning the pedals of the bike. It gives you feedback as you pedal. Hopefully, you become more in control of the movements as you pedal. I worry about the time and travel distance of participating in the study, but it could be very worthwhile to Darren, and to the SCI population as a whole. We'll keep you informed of his progress.

We've had a few frustrating setbacks with necessary equipment, but hopefully things will work out. I bought a used pair of e-motion wheels for Darren's manual chair, and the batteries had to be replaced. One day he was at school and they just ran out of juice. They are much heavier than his regular wheels, which doesn't matter if they are working properly, but when they don't work at all, the chair is very hard to push. When working properly, these wheels give him a power boost and don't require as much effort to push. They are great for going up inclines, hills, uneven terrain, and for getting back into his van. So hopefully, the new batteries did the trick and he'll be back in business. We'll know in a few days, when the batteries have been through a few charge/discharge cycles. Meanwhile, his power chair wheel gear broke, making that unusable. That is in the shop now, and will most likely take more than a week to repair. The downside of that is that he can't drive himself anywhere. So we are chauffeuring him around this week, and it's lucky that Ari has off from school to help us with that. Hopefully, this too will be resolved quickly. Never a dull moment.....

So, we are back to a routine of sorts, and happy to be home! Thank you for keeping in touch, and as Darren keeps updating his website, be sure to check back often, and see what's new! Continued thanks for your prayers and good wishes.

With love and hope,

Cynthia

March 24, 2006

Hi everyone,

Well, it looks like I've gone to monthly updates - for better or worse! Even though the schedules are busy, and a lot is going on, I can't say there's much "new" news. But I'm sure as I start writing, I'll find more than I thought I had to say. Funny how that happens!

Yesterday was Darren's 20th birthday. Since his college spring break was this week, yesterday was a good day to go the Y and get back into the pool. He had been wanting to do this for awhile, but the schedule just hadn't allowed for any time, until this week. The fact that we chose to do it on Thursday had nothing to do with his birthday; it was just a good day for scheduling - free time, pool time, and Eric's schedule too. Then we went to our favorite restaurant, Segovia, for a wonderful dinner.

The time in the pool was interesting - Darren's legs and whole body, really, were quite active with spasms. It made doing a lot of his exercises he did this past summer more difficult and frustrating. But we just did what we could, tried new things, and just wanted to see how he would do. Maybe its the new movement he has in his legs? Maybe it was the water temperature (a little cool)? Maybe just the fact that he hadn't been in the water in such a long time. But anyway, he was glad he tried it and happy about the overall experience in the end.

In preparing for his upcoming birthday, I tried not to dwell on the fact that this was NOT how Darren's 20th birthday should be spent. How so many things have changed, how we have all lost so much (especially Darren), and how we are still grieving over these losses. Of course, these thoughts are always present in my mind, just sometimes closer to the surface, other times further below. What I tried to think about was celebrating Darren's 20 years of living. In the past 21 months, Darren has shown all of us what his first 18 years taught him - determination, a willingness to work hard to reach a goal, the ability to stay focused and motivated when it would be so easy to give up, the mental toughness to deal with something that for most of us is unimaginable, and more. How he does it, I honestly don't know. But I do know that he has helped me, and many of you, too, get through the low points and the little things, and focus on what's truly important in life. He is here, he is with us, and I am so grateful for that. So yesterday (and everyday, actually) I celebrated all that Darren has given to all of us, through his spirit, his humor, and his wonderful smile. He is a gift from God, as are all our children, and he brings immeasurable happiness and joy to us as his parents. That has not changed, and neither has he. So here's to his 20th birthday, and we wish him many more!

As Darren maintains his workouts with Eric three times a week, he is continuing to participate in the FES bike study at Children's Hospital in Mountainside. The length of the study is 9 months, and hopefully Darren's schedule would allow him to continue for the whole time. There have been such good reports lately of people who use this kind of stim bike and the results shown, that we are hopeful Darren will see some positive results himself. Time will tell. The fact that he has access to this type of equipment, using it twice a week, and especially at no charge, is so wonderful. We will keep you updated on any progress in this area.

So that's it for today's update. As Darren continues to work on and improve his website, check it out every now and then to see what's new. In addition to providing all of you with pictures and detailed information, I hope that other people and families in similar situations will find it helpful as well. I think part of our purpose now is to inform and educate others about spinal cord injuries and treatments, and offer support to those who might be in need themselves. I hope the website helps us all to do that.

With love, hope and prayers - and looking forward to spring, warm weather and flowers,

Cynthia

May 13th, 2006

Hello everyone,

Everything seems fairly routine around here. I guess that's a good thing!

As Darren's semester winds down, he is looking forward to a less hectic schedule. But he still has his tests and exams to get through, and knowing how conscientious he is to do well, he is, of course, studying hard and preparing to get good grades. Soon it will be all over, and he'll be able to relax!

The summer schedule will probably consist of pool and land workouts with Eric, deep tissue muscle massage, continued participation in the FES (stim bike) at Mountainside Children's Hospital, and hopefully some down time, too!

Our trip to Project Walk in California is pretty much planned. Darren will be there for 3 weeks in July. John & I will be there for one week, Eric for 2 1/2 weeks and Ari for one week as well. It's taking a lot of coordinating and planning, but I'm hoping it all comes together. Since I won't be there with him the whole time, I need to arrange help for Darren in the morning, and that has me on edge a bit. We'll be staying at our friends' house, which will be wonderful (THANK YOU AI and Linda!!!), but the idea of bringing someone in to care for him is a tricky situation. So I'm still working on that. Otherwise, Darren is very excited about returning to Project Walk, and so are the rest of us. I know it will be another great experience, and we just hope and pray for more recovery, more good results and a productive three weeks.

One of the young men that we met at Shepherd was just in Portugal for a surgery with Dr. Lima that holds promise for a lot of spinal cord injured people. Paul lives near Rochester, NY, and traveled to Portugal with his Mom and Grandpa for 2 weeks. During that time, Dr. Lima harvested olfactory cells from Paul's nose, and used them to inject into the area of the spinal cord injury. Olfactory cells are considered ideal to use, because they have the ability to regenerate themselves. I hope I have this explanation correct. If not, I think it's close! Anyway, this surgery is very promising, and we are anxious to see how Paul's recovery goes. He's home now, but he'll be going back to Shepherd Center in GA for some intensive rehab and therapy in 2 weeks. If you want to know more about Paul's situation, you can check his website at www.paulspath.com. Click on updates on the left, and follow the progress as outlines from his Mom go in chronological order. While we know that all people and injuries are different, it is encouraging to learn more and follow the progress of a procedure like this, especially in someone we know. This is only one of many exciting things that are happening in the field of SCI research and treatments, so we continue to be hopeful that a "cure" is in sight for the future.

As Arianne winds down her senior year, and all that goes along with it, we are looking forward to spending some time at the shore house this summer. Ari & I went there for a day a few weeks ago, and it was our first time back since Darren's accident. I honestly didn't know how I'd feel pulling up or going in, but I was very happy once I did. I've missed that house! The house, the view, our belongings - all of it! It was like looking at a lot of things for the first time - again! We made a project of cleaning it, which it needed, but also gave me a reason to be there, to work and think at the same time, to remember why I loved being there, and remember lots of good memories. Funny, but I don't think I cried that day, surprisingly enough. But now, thinking back on that day, and looking forward to Darren going, too, I am crying. Strange how emotions can get the best of me, when I least expect them to. Anyway, I was really glad that Ari and I went together. It was therapeutic and productive at the same time. And we spent the whole day together, which is rare, given her busy schedule these days! I look forward to being there for a few visits this summer. And Darren plans on going not only with us, but having time there with his friends, too.

Besides Project Walk, this summer will be filled with plans to send Ari off to Ithaca, and Darren to live at Ramapo. It will seem strange to have them both go at once, but I look forward to it, too. Not how we planned for this to happen, but it is happening nonetheless. More details on that in the next update, as that's when things will really start coming together. It will be a busy, exciting time!

For feeling like I didn't have much to say, I managed to write a lot, as usual! I hope you continue to enjoy these updates, as sporadic as infrequent as they've become, and that you check out the website every now and then to see if Darren has posted anything new.

Oops, almost forgot - there's going to be a 5K Run for Darren fund raiser here in Kinnelon on September 16th. We'll be looking for volunteers, runners and walkers, and donations, so I'll be telling you more about that in the coming weeks. Keep your eyes open for more information and details!

Until next time, with love, prayers and hope,

Cynthia

June 12th, 2006

Hello Everyone!

Plans are well underway and we are finalizing last minute details for the upcoming "Run for Darren" which will be held this Saturday, September 16th at Kinnelon High School. It will be a 5K Run/Walk & Fun Run for Kids. If you have volunteered to help, you should be getting a phone call or e-mail to tell you what time to show up. If you've already registered, come early to get your number and packet. If you plan on walking or running, but haven't registered yet, you can do it that morning. Registration tables will be set up at 7:30 am. The run/walk is scheduled to start at 9 am and the Fun Run is scheduled for 10:00. We are anticipating a big crowd, so come early! If you are not participating or helping, come anyway to cheer on those who are. We would love to have as many people as possible!

So this is Darren's first full week at Ramapo. He is all moved in to his dorm now, and classes have started. It will take him some time to adjust and figure everything out, but knowing Darren, that will not take him long! I am so proud of him! I know he will do just fine. He is still trying to figure out how to maintain his workouts, and where he can keep equipment, but I am also confident that will come together, too.

Arianne is all settled at Ithaca College, and each e-mail and phone call confirm that she is having a great time. Hopefully, she is managing her school work as well as she's managing her social life.....

Hope to see many of you on Saturday. Stop by the Information Table - that's where the Templeton gang will be.

With love and prayers,

Cynthia

December 20th, 2006

Hello Everyone, and Happy Holidays!

I wanted to write a quick update and just let everyone know how we're doing, and what we're up to. Darren & Ari are busy finishing up their final exams, and I look forward to having them back home either tonight or tomorrow. They'll be finishing up their Christmas shopping, but I'm happy to say I'm finished and even did all the wrapping by myself, since Ari wasn't around to help. L Oh well, hopefully she'll have time to help me with some baking! As always, I look forward to the holidays and our traditions of gathering with friends and family to celebrate Christmas. With all of the preparations, it just all seems to go so fast! But I look forward to enjoying all that the holidays bring.

This year, I am thankful that Darren has completed his first semester living at college, has done well with his classes (at least I hope he has!), and has had no secondary complications to his SCI. He has managed all the details of living away and going to school on top of everything else, and I am so very proud of him. He continues to do more and more, and will be interning in NYC next semester at a bank 2 days a week while taking his required courses. What a wonderful opportunity and a gutsy decision to take on this challenge. I know he'll do well.

Ariane has struggled with her biology course, but she seems to have pulled off a passing grade with a lot of hard work and determination. Her other classes were all easier than bio! She especially enjoyed her Understanding Disabilities class and has been busy with campus activities. All in all, she seems to have adjusted well to college life, but is looking forward to the break!

Darren will be returning to Project Walk on January 1st for 2 weeks. He is very much looking forward to this trip, determined to work hard and take advantage of new training techniques that have been developed there in recent months. I expect him to come home exhausted, but rejuvenated in his desire to do as much as possible for his own recovery. His two friends, Greg and Chris, will each be in California for a week with Darren, so I can stay home and focus on the new business (more about that below). Our good friends, Al and Linda Wilson, have generously agreed to host Darren and friends (again!).

Ari will be skiing with Ithaca Ski Team, and will be going back a week early to practice and train for the upcoming season. Needless to say, she is excited about the team, and will be anxiously awaiting snow and cold weather!

So our new business, Push to Walk, has officially been incorporated as a New Jersey Non-Profit Corporation, and now the fun (and work!) begins. We have signed a one year lease in Bloomingdale, have painted the whole place, and will continue getting it ready to open as soon as possible. Our accountant will now file the necessary paperwork to get our 501c(3) designation, so we can start fund raising. It is very exciting to think that we can not only give Darren the best possible training right here, but that we can offer services to others as well. It is a huge undertaking, with all that starting a new business brings, but we are optimistic that we can make it a success. You can check out our website, which is still under construction, at www.pushtowalknj.org.

(Don't forget the "nj" at the end!)

I know it's not a great time of year to ask for "stuff," (Santa – are you listening?!) but we are still in need of a few things that would greatly help us, and keep our costs down. As we are operating on a shoestring budget, every little thing helps! We have had several wonderful items donated already, and you will all be thanked in these updates or on the website, whether you like it or not! We are so grateful to all of those who have offered to help. The items we still need are a small kitchen table and chairs (the smaller the better; there's not room for much!), a boom box or stereo system that we can hook up to ceiling speakers, a working vacuum cleaner, a couch or 2 chairs to use for guests and a small table, and the biggie – an "all-in-one" printer/scanner/fax machine. If you have any of these items that you can donate to a worthy cause, we would be very, very appreciative. Please let me know by calling 973-492-1654 or e-mailing me directly at cynthiat@optonline.net.

I wish all of you a Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah and a happy and healthy New Year. May you enjoy your families and friends and all that the holiday season brings. I am blessed to have all of you in

our lives, however near or far, and am thankful for all that God has given to us in the past and will continue to give us in the future. As Pastor Sandy Hull said in last Sunday's sermon, "Do not be afraid. With God, nothing is impossible." (Luke 1:30, 37)

With love, prayers and hope for miracles in this Christmas season,

Cynthia