

**January 4, 2005 – March 30, 2005**  
**Kessler Rehab Continued, Coaching Hockey and Visiting Colleges**

January 4, 2005

Wow, January 4th! Happy New Year everyone. I hope you enjoyed the holiday.

I'm writing this as I'm "on hold" with the insurance company. Not for Darren, this time, but for Ari. Just minutes after I wrote the last update, I received one of those dreaded phone calls from your child that something is wrong. This one came from Mountain Creek, where Ari had been ski racing. She had fallen and twisted her knee. A week later, and its still swollen and painful. We are trying to make an appt. for an MRI, but the new process of getting a pre-certification and help in making the appointment has frustrated me all day today. I guess if I write long enough, maybe they'll pick up eventually. At least I'm doing something productive while waiting.

So in the meantime, Ari is hobbling around on crutches, dreading what might be wrong with her knee. Let's hope its something minor and she can get back on her skis as soon as possible.

Speaking of insurance, I was notified today that they will cover a piece of equipment for Darren - a standing machine. Yea!!! It will be really good for him to get used to standing, as it will stretch out his hips and legs, and the weight bearing aspect is important also. So that is good news today!

Well, our home health aide is back, and its wonderful to have the help. She is a fast learner, and very thorough and careful in her care of Darren. Between her 3 hours in the morning, and friends taking Darren to Kessler some afternoons, I am getting time for myself to get office work done, run errands, etc. More sense of a routine, which is coming in bits and pieces. At least its coming, and I am thankful for that.

Darren's spirits continue to stay positive, and he is working at being more and more independent everyday. With proper set-up, which is easier now in the accessible bathroom, he can do his own catheters several times a day. Its just a matter of figuring how to set things up, and where, and how to make things as easy and convenient as possible. Its not only easier for us (me and John) but so much better for his own sense of accomplishment and independence. So he continues to work hard at all kinds of skills.

Our 2000 piece puzzle continues to keep us busy, and is another good form of therapy for Darren as well. It gives us something to do in between other activities, and we sit and chat while doing it. (I've just been disconnected from the ins. co. and now had to re-dial and start all over again...)

A little FYI for the following families: you have containers and/or plates on my front porch waiting for you - the Weingartens, Wheales and Kobylarz. As always, thanks to you and all the other food donors. We continue to get the BEST meals!

Well, my call still hasn't been answered by a live person (its been 45 minutes now), and I'm afraid by the time they do pick up, if they ever do, that the MRI place will be closed and we won't be able to do the scheduling anyway. Oy, how frustrating. I guess it will be tomorrow's business.....

With love, hope and prayers for future recovery,

Cynthia

January 8, 2005

Just to mix things up a little bit, this is Ari, and I just wanted to say a few things about the concert. My mom will fill you in on more details about Darren soon.

Unfortunately, I waited until Roots of Rebellion, the last band, was finished playing when I went on stage to say my thanks. By that time a lot of the audience had filtered out and only a fraction of the people were still there. So for those of you who didn't here, I just thanked Mr. Wubbenhorst and the KHS Alumni Association for putting on such an amazing show. All three bands did an outstanding job and performed fantastically. Also, Mrs. Torriello and the Principle's Ambassadors did an awesome job with ticket sales and advertising. The concert was actually over-sold, and there was little standing area left, to believe it or not. I am truly amazed at the number of community members that came out to this event, and there's nothing more heart warming then that. It's really comforting to have the entire community behind my family, and it really helps us along everyday. Not only Kinnelon residents attended this concert either. Many family friends from surrounding towns came, including our ski family that we have been a part of for the last several years.

Hopefully most you that were there saw Darren, as he was anxious to see a lot of people.

Another huge thanks to the Wubbenhorst's who did an outstanding job putting the night together, your efforts are really appreciated. Thanks to everyone who came out to the concert, what a night to remember...

Much love, Ari

January 10, 2005

Hello everyone!

First off, a very special Happy Birthday wish to my good friend and neighbor, Carol Gordon. Many of you have "met" Carol through e-mails and phone calls while she was helping with the e-mail updates and the dinner arrangements. Here's a "shout out" as all of you kids would say!

I want to tell you about the events of last Wednesday, but they are routine compared to the wonderful concert this past Friday night. So I'll start with the concert and work my way backwards!

As the song says "Oh, what a night!" Everything about it was perfect, from the pre-concert dinner at the Regans to the kids being at our house afterwards, and everything in between. Andy Wubbenhorst did a fantastic job pulling it all together, and it was a huge success. I have an idea of some of the people who were involved in the many aspects of the evening, but instead of mentioning some and leaving out others, I hope you all accept our THANKS without naming names. Our thanks, too, to the bands and their "behind the scenes" people who gave us the music. Suffice it to say that I know an event like that takes much planning, and we truly appreciate all of your efforts, large and small alike. Thanks also to all those who placed ads and messages in the program. What a surprise to see some names we haven't heard from in a while. Everyone was so generous and supportive.

It was so good to see so many people, and for so many people to see Darren as well. I have to admit it did feel kind of strange to sit there listening while people said our names, realizing this was all for US. Strange, but heart-warming at the same time. Once I got past that, I enjoyed seeing everyone, dancing, and socializing. The hugs were the best! And to see so many people go and talk with Darren was great, too. I know he enjoyed seeing everyone.

Not only was it great to realize that so many Kinnelon residents supported us, but friends from afar who traveled here just for the event. That was really special. It was an evening to be remembered for a long, long time!

Now back to last Wednesday! Darren woke up that morning and said "I want to have a really productive day today." (No kidding, he said exactly that.) I asked him what he meant by productive, and he proceeded to tell me that he wanted to get on the mat to do exercises, use the electric stimulation on his triceps, register for his on-line course and read. I thought it seemed like a lot, but OK, who was I to discourage him? So after the morning routine of his care and shower, he wanted to dress himself. He always puts on his t-shirt, but that morning he wanted to put on his pants. I think he wanted to practice this, because an OT was scheduled to come on Friday to work on just that. So work he did, and with minimum assistance, he was successful in getting his pants almost all the way on. After that, he wanted to roll himself and get into a sitting position, and get himself out of the bed. (All the while I'm thinking - well, he wanted to be productive today...) Keep in mind that these are all tasks we can do ourselves with a minimum amount of effort. Not so with Darren. He works and struggles to do these things, and each time he does them, he gets better and better. But they are very tiring. Anyway, Grandma Millie was here for the end of the dressing and the rest of the routine, and she was very impressed. She is his biggest cheerleader (next to me, of course!) and was clapping for him. She gave him even more inspiration, and kept him smiling, too.

Later that day, Arek came over to do his stretches and exercises with him, and he also signed up for his on-line course and ordered his books. That evening, another friend came over and worked on his arms and shoulders. He also managed to do some reading. He figures he needs to get back into that! He's reading *The Dennis Byrd Story*.

I think I might even be leaving something out that he did, because by the end of the day, he was truly exhausted! Talk about a productive day! He accomplished his goals, and then some. He was quite proud of himself, and so was I. He was like that energizer bunny that day. And he had therapy and went to the fitness center the day before, then had therapy both Thursday and Friday. Also on Friday morning, the OT did come, and he worked some more on dressing. You can imagine that this weekend, he took it easy. Deservedly so!! (Except for the concert, friends over afterward, the JETS game and more friends, and 2 Bantam hockey games to help coach - was that taking it easy???) Then the routine started all over again today, with the OT here again for MORE dressing! And today it was even easier and faster. The whole idea is "problem solving" to see what works, and what doesn't, and see what makes the tasks easier. Whew, I feel tired just re-living the whole thing!

I hope I give you a little bit of insight into what Darren does on a daily basis. Things like getting out of bed, taking a shower, getting into the car - things that take us just a few minutes - take lots more time for him. But every day, there is improvement and progress. And every day, he does more and more for himself. As we take each day at a time, I am thankful each and every day that he is motivated, determined and in such good spirits. I hope for those of you that got to see him at the concert, or have seen him here at home, or out and about, you get a sense of who Darren really is. If I might say so myself, he is a wonderful kid. I am truly proud of him and all that he has accomplished.

Thanks to all of you for your continued support. With so many people pulling for us, I know great things are possible.

With love and prayers,

Cynthia

January 14, 2005

Hi everyone, I think this is going to be a "Templeton Family" update today - what a great way to spread news!

Happy 17th Birthday to our wonderful daughter, Arianne. Today she passed her driving test! Yea!!! I was so glad she did, after finding out that her ACL (ligament) is torn in her knee and surgery might be needed, she did not need another disappointment. So passing the driving test was a good thing! She has an appt a week from today with a knee specialist, so we will discuss options then. In the meantime, she will start PT today.

A few follow-up comments on last week's concert. Only a few adults were left when Ari got up on-stage to thank everyone, but from what I hear she did a great job. Even John & I were in the hallway, so we didn't hear either. But I am so proud of her for doing that. Good job, Ari!

If anyone has any of the Trends or Daily Record articles and pictures that were published either before or after the concert, could you please e-mail me? I only have the Record article the day before, but I understand there was a picture the day before that (Wed), and also Trends articles before and after. So please let me know if you have an extra copy I might be able to have.

A lot of Darren's friends are going back to college soon, and I just want to say a huge THANK YOU to all of them, including those that are home and commuting locally. They are all great kids, spending time and going out with him. You might think that, well, they'd do that anyway. But sometimes kids have a hard time with situations like this, and don't know what to do or how to do it. Not his friends. They have been there for him, and as his mom, I say THANKS!!!

Not much other news to report, except to look for Sunday's Star Ledger, where John was interviewed about the non-hockey season, and a photographer came to take a picture of both John and Darren.

With love and prayers, Cynthia

Sunday, January 16, 2005

NHL season appears lost

BY RICH CHERE

Star-Ledger Staff

Neither the NHL nor the players' union needs an official drop-dead date to kill any last chance at playing hockey this season.

It now seems likely the 2004-05 season will be lost while both sides remain firm in their fight over a salary cap. Originally, yesterday was thought to be the unofficial drop-dead date for a 40-game schedule, but if there is no new collective bargaining agreement by Feb. 1, it will be impossible to play an abridged season of just 32 games. Commissioner Gary Bettman has said there will be no hockey in July.

"I honestly don't think they're ever going to cancel the season for legal reasons," Devils player representative Brian Rafalski said last week. "But unless they come up with something different, I don't see anything happening. Are we just about out of time for this season? Yes."

The Players' Association, which has made significant concessions in a proposal to roll back salaries 24 percent, will not discuss a salary cap and says the next move must come from the league.

Bettman and the owners made a counteroffer of a salary rollback scale from 15-35 percent and the elimination of salary arbitration, but that was rejected by the players. Bettman says no new proposal is in the works and the owners remain adamant about dealing with cost certainty through a salary cap.

"Collective bargaining is a dynamic process, but I continue to believe the onus is on the union," NHL chief legal officer Bill Daly said via an e-mail reply. "We've looked at several scheduling scenarios and, while

I'm not prepared to be specific as to how many games would need to be played to create a legitimate schedule, I do believe we're into a very critical time period if there is any hope of playing games this year."

As the lockout nears the four-month mark, here's a look at those affected:

## THE GENERAL MANAGER

Taking the NHL away from Devils general manager Lou Lamoriello is a lot like taking a steak out of the mouth of a hungry dog. He is not happy.

"Do I have more free time? I sure do," Lamoriello said with a tinge of bitterness. "Maybe the people in the office wish I wasn't around as much. I'm sure they'd like to see me on the road more."

Lamoriello has done his best to keep busy. In addition to his role on the NHL's labor team, Lamoriello has monitored the Devils' draft picks, attended the world junior championships in North Dakota and has seen many more minor-league games than usual. He also has concentrated on the proposed new arena in Newark.

But without the Devils, one of the game's hardest-working GMs undoubtedly has felt withdrawal symptoms. He attends virtually every game (home and away), every practice and jets off to see other games on off-nights.

"I think it's been hard on everybody -- the players, employees, the office staff," he said. "It's hard on a lot of people, and I feel for them. When you see where we are, the potential for the season not happening is real. It doesn't look good, but everything should be between the commissioner and Bob Goodenow."

Lamoriello said he stills speaks with other GMs, "but not about hockey. There are friendships as well." And he speaks daily with Devils owner Jeff Vanderbeek about the new arena.

"My work habits haven't changed," Lamoriello said. "The only change is, unfortunately, I'm not seeing what I have the passion for -- the games and practices."

Lamoriello has avoided layoffs and continues to pay his radio broadcasters and office staff. But, he admits, the toughest days may be ahead if a shortened schedule cannot be played. Cuts will need to be made.

"We haven't had to do anything yet, but we will shortly," he said.

## THE PLAYER

It was a perfect summer for Devils defenseman Scott Niedermayer. First, he won the Norris Trophy as the NHL's top defenseman and then an arbitrator awarded him a one-year contract worth \$7 million, a substantial increase from the \$4 million he made last season. Finally, he helped Team Canada win the World Cup of Hockey in September.

But Niedermayer never got to enjoy his status as the best defenseman in the league, and has seen millions of dollars disappear during the lockout.

"I'm not going to complain," Niedermayer said from his home in British Columbia. "I've been playing a long time, I have had success on the ice and been paid well for it. Obviously, the contract I signed was the biggest I would have made. It's too bad for sure, but that's the way it goes."

Niedermayer, who has lost approximately \$3.5 million, said everyone has endured disappointments.

"Look at Tampa Bay," he said. "They win the Stanley Cup and they don't get to put up their banner right away. I don't know how they got their rings. This is definitely not what anyone would want. The majority of hockey players want to be on the ice."

Niedermayer has made the best of his time off, however. He and his wife, Lisa, spent several weeks vacationing in Hawaii and he enjoyed Christmas and New Year's at home.

"Quite enjoyable, actually," Niedermayer said. "When you have three kids, it's not too difficult to find things to do. Do I miss (hockey)? Yes. Did I miss training camp? No. But I'm used to playing hockey at this time of year, so it is strange. I've tried not to think about it a whole lot.

"During the last lockout, I always thought it was about to end. This time I'm taking the approach that when the call comes, it comes. That's the only way to make it a bit easier."

## THE MINOR-LEAGUE EXECUTIVE

With the NHL out of sight, minor-league hockey has been out of mind for most fans.

Back in October, minor-league executives thought NHL fans hungry for hockey would start attending minor-league games. Some have, but most have not.

Mike Miller, vice president and general manager of the Toledo Storm of the ECHL was one of those who expected his club to benefit from the lockout.

"I've kind of changed my tune the last few weeks," Miller said. "We have not seen a change in our gate in relation to the lockout. I thought the NHL lockout would have helped business for a majority of minor-league teams. Here in Toledo, it's had the opposite effect.

"We're south of something called Hockeytown. I think hockey being on TV every night and the Detroit Red Wings playing got people thinking about hockey and it helped us. An NHL game is a 2 1/2-hour infomercial for us reminding people of hockey. But I don't hear a lot of hockey talk. Hockey isn't on people's minds."

Miller said some fans were uncertain about whether the lockout extended beyond the NHL to the minors. That confusion does not seem to be a problem, but getting fans interested without the high-profile NHL remains a concern.

## THE REFEREE

No one has refereed more NHL games than Kerry Fraser. This would have been his 30th NHL training camp had it not been for the lockout.

But the respected referee is getting himself prepared to be a full-time real estate agent if the season is canceled. Fraser and his wife, Kathy, earned their real estate licenses during the lockout in 1994 and are ready to fall back on that profession.

"Until we get the final notification, I am optimistic," Fraser said. "So much is at stake, it's in everybody's interest to find a resolution. But there's a lot of anxiety. As much as I'm trying to stay upbeat and positive, there are also those moments.

"Forget the money we're losing. If the season is a wash, we're not going to replace that \$300,000 we're losing. But age also becomes a factor. You can't do this forever."

Fraser, 52, has used his free time to work on projects around his South Jersey home.

He was told by an electrician that 55 feet of trenches three feet deep had to be dug from the house to the coach lamps, so Fraser did the digging himself with a pick and shovel.

Then, the driveway needed repair. When he saw a contractor jump out of his backhoe to toss chunks of the driveway into the bucket, he put on his work clothes and offered to do the job.

"The contractor said, 'You'd better be careful, you might break a fingernail,' Fraser said. "I didn't bother even putting gloves on. I did the job and then went inside and checked my fingernails."

Fellow ref Bill McCreary is doing carpentry work with a kitchen cabinet maker. Don Van Massenhoven is selling cars in his hometown in Ontario. And Rob Shick is supervising amateur officials as a volunteer.

Fraser and his wife have become ecclesiastical ministers.

"It's frustrating for all of us in every facet of the game," Fraser said. "We're trying not to buy a ticket on the roller-coaster ride. If you let this disruption wreak havoc on you emotionally, it affects how you feel, your family and the people around you."

## THE FAN

Longtime Devils season ticket-holder John Templeton will not look back on 2004 fondly. At the end of July, the Kinnelon resident's 18-year-old son, Darren, was injured in a diving accident at the Jersey Shore and remains paralyzed below the waist.

The NHL's labor issues weren't foremost on Templeton's mind as his son began therapy, but father and son have shared hockey since Darren, then a 4-year-old, attended his first Devils game.

"We're missing it for sure," Templeton said. "It's our main sport. For 20-something years, my winters have centered around hockey. It's a big void. We never paid attention to other sports, but I've become a Nets fan.

"It's been a really difficult year for us. In a way, not having hockey might have been a godsend. I probably would've wound up giving lots of tickets away."

The Templetons have had more contact with the Devils than most. Lamoriello has called many times to ask about Darren. Several members of the organization have visited.

Templeton, who has attended around 35 games a year since 1983, guesses there won't be an NHL season and says Darren misses watching games on TV. When the league comes back, father and son will return to the Meadowlands but won't follow the team to Newark.

"The lockout won't (sour) me," Templeton said, "but the Devils moving to Newark will. I don't want to see that happen at all. That would probably be the end of my tickets."

## THE TICKET GUY

Ron Vanderveen's job as general manager of Continental Airlines Arena is to make sure the building is as busy as possible.

This time of year, that usually means trying to find a concert or a family show, such as the circus, to rent the building months from now because the Nets, Devils or Seton Hall are usually using the place.

But with the Devils on the bench because of the NHL lockout, Vanderveen is having a year like no other, wearing out the buttons on his phone pad as he tries to book some 25 prime nights when hockey won't take place there without a last-minute labor settlement.

"It sure is interesting," Vanderveen said. "It's a lot easier to do this job when you know for sure what dates are going to be available."

Instead, Vanderveen is booking acts that will agree to postpone their shows if hockey returns, such as the religious singer Steven Curtis Chapman, who agreed in December to perform at the arena on Feb. 26, assuming the Devils won't be playing the Islanders that night, as they were supposed to.

During the fall, the NHL would only release arena dates within 45 days, but Vanderveen and others have already begun booking dates much further out than that. For instance, Vanderveen normally wouldn't have booked any dates the week of April 13, when the NHL playoffs are supposed to begin. Now he's got Cher coming on April 13, Rod Stewart on the 15th and probably an Indian concert the next night.

It's not the Dave Matthews Band, but right now the arena will take what it can get.

"Usually we're booking shows six to eight months in advance," Vanderveen said. "There is only so much you can do on one to two months notice."

Staff writer Matthew Futterman contributed to this report.

January 23, 2005

Hello everyone,

Today it is 6 months since Darren's injury. I think the 23rd of every month will bring tears to my eyes as I remember the day that changed our lives. I can't imagine it ever being easy, but I am hopeful it will be. At least I hope it gets better than it is today.

While I have no new news to report, I will say that every day, Darren gets stronger and stronger and is able to do more and more for himself. He is still very determined to do things himself, and believes he will recover. His positive attitude continues.

Yesterday (Saturday), we had a "therapist" come to the house who specializes in a particular method of stretching and exercising. She follows the techniques of a clinic in Florida, and was very knowledgeable about stretches and strengthening. We really liked her, and she was able to give us a lot of stuff we can do on our own, and with others' assistance. Unfortunately, the snow storm interfered with her time, but the session was very worthwhile. In one way, what she had to show us was overwhelming. Darren could be busy the entire time he is awake, doing "something!" But I know the stretches are good, and trying to get the body parts to "wake up" seems to make sense. So that was a worthwhile find, and I'm sure we'll have her come back. One noteworthy thing - she did one stretch with Darren and could feel his ab muscles contracting. That was very positive and encouraging, so we'll be sure to work more on those muscles.

We tried to do something today that turned out to be very difficult and emotional. We wanted to sort out some things in Darren's "old" room, and put some things into his new room. As John and I came back into the room after moving a piece of furniture, his head was down on his desk, and he was crying. Well, we all were crying in a matter a minutes. He said it was just too hard being in that room, with all of the old memories. I said we need to hang onto those memories, because they were good memories, and now we would make new ones. Lots of tears, hugs and tissues (even now as I write, there are more). I knew the task would be hard, which is why I kept putting it off, but I underestimated how all of us would react.



Needless to say, we put it off for another time in the future. Perhaps we can tackle it one small step at a time, and see how we do.

This past week, I had Arianne to two different doctors. She has TMJ in her jaw, causing a loud click when she opens her mouth wide, and its been getting worse. So she was fitted with an "appliance" to correct the alignment of the jaw. Its uncomfortable, but hopefully will do the trick. Then she went to see a knee specialist, and sure enough he recommended surgery to repair the tear in her ACL. We were expecting that, so it was no surprise, but it is worrisome, of course. I am very proud of how Ari is handling all of this. As much as she looks forward to ski season (all year long!), she seems to be keeping it in perspective. Hopefully Darren will be a comfort to her as she was to him during his time in the hospital. And I'm sure he will be. This is only same-day surgery, and its scheduled for Feb 17th. I figured we would schedule it around the few days she has off for President's Day, and miss as little of school as possible. I might be calling for some reinforcements that week, friends, so beware!

Please know we continue to appreciate the meals that are being delivered, and thank all the wonderful cooks who are keeping us fed and healthy. You are all so generous to give us your time in doing that. Besides the therapy at Kessler 3 times a week, it seems that at least one other day there is another kind of appointment, for Darren, and now in addition to that for Ari, too, so the meals are still a huge help. Thank you.

I look forward to hearing from more of you, now that the holidays are over, and a routine is coming together. Please call or e-mail and we'll try to get together.

With continued hope for healing, and with love and prayers,

Cynthia

January 31, 2005

Hi everyone, I hope you all had as good a weekend as we did here at #8 Honeysuckle!

It started with dinner out with friends on Friday night, a nice lunch and visits with friends on Saturday, playing cards and enjoying a fabulous dinner in on Saturday, then more friends visiting on Sunday. A very special visitor also came on Sunday, thanks to our friend Randy Velischek, who arranged for Scott Stevens to come and see Darren. For all of you hockey fans, especially Devils fans, Scott needs no introduction. For all the others, he's the Captain of the NJ Devils. What a special visit! He was great to have here, asking and answering questions, and just chatting. What a super guy. While I don't usually "name names" in my updates, I have to say a huge thank you to Randy for setting this up. What a good friend you have become, and it is wonderful that you have shown us how much you care about Darren and our situation.

This morning, I woke with a smile on my face. I had two dreams of Darren walking. One was very detailed and clear, the other was just a short bit of a fuzzy dream. I couldn't recall much, but he was definitely walking! Two friends also dreamed of Darren walking - and I love to hear those kind of stories. Positive thinking (and dreaming) can only be signs of something good, I just know it.

For the first time since I've been home, I walked on the treadmill this morning. It felt good! I also went to the office for a few hours, and instead of just running in and out to do something specific, I stayed for the afternoon and did routine stuff like answer the phone and filing! That felt good, too. Of course, it took me

a while to get "re-acclimated" but after that, it was great. Who would ever think that just doing routine "stuff" could feel so good?!

Well, since this update has been all about me so far, I better include some news about Darren - that's what you all want to hear anyway, right? He has started his online course, Intro to Philosophy - and got a hundred on his first quiz. He also did his weekly work in the first few days, so he knows he'll be able to handle the workload if he stays on top of it. I have no doubt that he will, knowing the type of student he has always been.

Other than that, no real new news to report. I hope and pray for some new movement, just to see some healing. It is such a slow process, and we just can't hurry it. People who see Darren infrequently are still impressed with how much he can do, and how much he has progressed since they last saw him, so I know he is doing well. But it would be nice just to see something new. Until then, we can only pray.

I have added new pictures to the online album, so check it out when you have time, and please sign the guestbook. Here's the link to the album:  
[http://www.imagestation.com/member/join\\_signin\\_prompt.html?album\\_id=4229700093&bnak=1&rf=album\\_guestbook&ru=%2Falbum%2Freview.html%3Fid%3D4229700093](http://www.imagestation.com/member/join_signin_prompt.html?album_id=4229700093&bnak=1&rf=album_guestbook&ru=%2Falbum%2Freview.html%3Fid%3D4229700093) Also, if you'd like to e-mail Darren directly, you can write to him at [puckzman16@yahoo.com](mailto:puckzman16@yahoo.com). I know he'd like to hear from you.

Until next time,

Cynthia

Finally, February 8, 2005

Hi everyone, and my apologies for not writing sooner. Waiting this long in between is bad because now I can't remember where I left off and where I should begin again! I'll try not to do that again!

So, of course, there's a lot to tell you - the most exciting news is that Darren is feeling his "glute" muscle on his right side. As best I can tell from my "exercise file" (where I put all those clippings of exercises and information I hope to use someday...) it sounds like its the gluteus maximus. The description I have of its job says "helps straighten leg and lifts leg away from body." So we know how important that could be. And the fact that its new movement, or muscle contraction, is wonderful news. So we hope and pray that it is truly a muscle working, showing continual healing.....

More good news comes from Alabama, where a patient from Shepherd is now reporting movement in first his right leg, then his left leg, and now he's walking on a treadmill with a harness and assistance! How wonderful is that??!! We wish Mike the best in his recovery (he's a similar injury level, July 4) and look forward to hearing of more progress.

This weekend was fun-filled and exciting. Our ski family/friends at Hidden Valley hosted a very nice event for Darren on Saturday night. It was a dinner, casino night, silent auction and a live band. It was SO good to see many people we hadn't seen until now. Friends from Mountain Creek were also there to see us and support Darren, and that was very special, too. A huge THANK YOU to Heather and Dave Kahl, Charlene and John Malley, Debbie and Dave Wiley, Nancy and Rich Howes, and ALL of the others who worked so hard (and so quickly!) to put this together. Thanks also to Greg Pier for the wonderful words he had for Darren and for all of us. It was a great night. Darren even said a few words, which made me very proud of him (again).

Being at Hidden Valley the night before a race means one thing - the next day's race is in every conversation. So it would be fitting that Darren & I went up to the mountain the next day for the race. If there was ever a perfect day to do that, Sunday was the day. It was unseasonably warm, sunny and beautiful. After much discussion of getting Darren from the Training Center to the race hill (quite a distance) - pull him in a tube? put him in the Cat? snowmobile? - Darren decided to stay put in the Training Center and see people as they came in. It worked out fine, and he got to see lots of racers and their parents. Of course, since I was sitting there, I got put to work, which I didn't mind, and helped me feel part of it all once again. Ari wasn't racing, but she was in the timing booth, announcing for the race. Apparently she's quite good at that, and enjoys helping, too.

As if that wasn't enough excitement, we still had Super Bowl festivities to participate in! Thanks to our good friend, Carol, for putting together the "pool" for bets. It was fun keeping track of how was winning, who might win, and if "this" happens or "that" happens, who would win! It was a fun evening with good food, good friends and a good game to watch. The quarter winners were Millie Harris (go Mom!), the Alesandro's and Joe Ragno. The final score was won by the DenDulk's.

Darren is enjoying his on-line Philosophy course, and is finding the amount of work manageable. He is thinking of attending William Paterson University in September, so we are exploring that option now. He is anxious to go to a campus and take classes in the classroom, and I think it will work out just fine. He'll be starting his driving evaluation in May, so hopefully will be driving and have a vehicle by then. Its a good goal to be working toward, and I give him a lot of credit to adjust his thinking and his plans for such a different approach to college. Not that it hasn't been difficult to adjust, but he seems to be handling it OK.

Now its back to the weekly routine. I now have an aide for the 5 weekday mornings, and that is working out well. I am still exploring other funding sources, programs and services, but it is a long, slow process and lots of paperwork. Between that and figuring out the insurance mess, it keeps me busy!

With love, prayers and hope,

Cynthia

February 16, 2005

Hello everyone,

This past weekend we went to see the campus of William Paterson University and Ramapo College. Darren really wants to go out to school in September, and he is considering these two and Montclair. All local and within commutable distance. It was very emotional, and more difficult than I thought it would be. Last year, Darren was deciding between Bentley College and Boston College. So different now. I don't mean to imply that these local schools are not good - they are. And we know lots of people who have gone and currently go to local schools, and that's all good, too. But its so....different.....now. Now we have to assess the terrain, the accessibility, the parking. Puts a whole new spin on things. Yes, its great that Darren wants to go, and that's the good part. He will excel wherever he goes, I know that, because of his determination and motivation. I just want him to be in the best place for him, right now. Hopefully, that could change in another year, and we'll be considering other options. But the deadlines are fast approaching, so now he is busy (once again) with applications, essays and required documents.....

Another emotional decision with accompanying discussion is about a vehicle for Darren. He will start the Driver Rehab program at Kessler in May, and we'll be deciding on a vehicle that he can drive and get

himself around in. I have no doubt he'll be able to drive himself, and what a difference that will make in his independence! But the emotional part is "this is the kind of vehicle we need" train of thought. Trying to stay on the positive side of things ("this is a good thing" kind of thinking) is sometimes more difficult than others. But each day, each event, each decision must be taken one step at a time. I keep reminding myself of that.

Yesterday (Tuesday) was a trying day on the medical side of things. Darren's left thigh had been swollen for several days, and I thought it was time to get it checked out. An x-ray to check for fractures or broken bones, an ultrasound to check for blood clots, and a blood test. Nothing out of the ordinary, thank goodness, so the swelling is most likely from a condition called HO (heterotopic ossification) where excess bone grows from inactivity. Often seen in the hip, which is where his is. The Doctor will be monitoring it to make sure its not getting worse. He's had it since about August, I think, and has been on medication for it all along. At least no fractures or blood clots! That was the good news.

Here's how Darren passes on good news, like I've told you all before: "oh, I can move the middle finger on my right hand today." That was Monday's news; I didn't even get it til Tuesday! He has been able to straighten that finger, but not bend it, but NOW HE CAN!!! Yea! More good news, more healing! The prayers keep working, so PLEASE keep on praying!!!

Speaking of prayers, please keep Ari in yours as she undergoes knee surgery to reconstruct her ACL on Thursday (tomorrow as I write this, but maybe today as you read it). I am confident that she has the best surgeon in the area, and that she will recuperate quickly. I'll be letting you know!

Went today to look at the pool at Cedar Crest - what a beautiful place! If Darren could use the pool there once a week, it would be very beneficial. They are being very accommodating there and trying to make it work for him, so if everything works out, we'll add that to our activities. Also went to Morristown to check out another funding source - a Medicaid waiver. It's pretty complicated, but he might qualify for Medicaid benefits under a special program even though technically he doesn't qualify for it. Tricky, but well worth the paperwork to get some benefits for home health aides, therapy, etc. We'll see.

Enough for now - if I could just write more often, these would be shorter, I think! Oh well, I write when I can; I know you understand. Please keep in touch - I still love hearing from all of you as much as possible.

With love, hope and prayers,

Cynthia

February 23, 2005

Hello everyone,

Today is the 7th month mark after Darren's injury. Could it be just 7 months? Could it be 7 months already? Time has a way of changing one's perceptions about lots of things, and I wouldn't even know where to begin with this 7 month journey. And what a journey it's been.....and you've been right there with me. Not a day goes by without receiving an uplifting e-mail, a card in the mail, a phone message, or hearing about something wonderful that someone or some group in the community is doing for us and for Darren. That is what keeps me going, and will keep us all going in the next 7 months and beyond. As we need to cope with this situation as a family, so we need all of your support as our extended family. I thank you all for your never-ending love, care, concern and prayers.

A few reminders: Most of you receive this e-mail from my good friend, Medora. Lots of others receive it from someone else who is forwarding it, and maybe even forwarding it again! Regardless, to keep the communication flowing as quickly as possible, if you want to write to me, it's best to write to me directly, not hit "reply" because that goes to Medora or someone else. So, for future reference, write to me directly at [cynthiat@optonline.net](mailto:cynthiat@optonline.net). Thanks!

Please check out the Hidden Valley website at [www.hvara.com](http://www.hvara.com), where several photos have been posted after their successful Dinner/Casino Fund-Raiser evening for Darren. In one of the pictures showing Darren from the side, he is showing off that million dollar smile I know and love. I'm sure you will recognize it and see the happiness on his face. Precious.

Now, for the latest and greatest from the Templeton household:

Arianne's knee surgery to reconstruct her ACL went well, and she is recuperating. The first few days were pretty rough, as we expected. But she is starting to feel better, eat better, and is overall doing better. She started physical therapy, and is reaching her (low) threshold of pain rather quickly, unfortunately. But this is the only way, and she knows it. I feel like a doctor, nurse and therapist all wrapped into one. At least I didn't have to learn all about ACL's since I learned about mine in 1992! And that's good, because I'm not sure how much more new information this old brain can absorb anymore! But seriously, Ari should be going back to school on Monday, hopefully only missing 4 days of school. Any get well wishes can be sent to her at [atempleton@optonline.net](mailto:atempleton@optonline.net). I'm sure she'd love to hear from you.

Darren made a trip to Marist College this past Sunday to see some good friends there. Two friends from here drove up with him, and they had a great time. It was quite a full day, and was even longer than they planned since they hit the snowstorm coming home Sunday night. It was a long drive home, with several phone calls filling us in on their whereabouts. They arrived safely, thank goodness.

The next day was a bit hard for Darren. He said that he had had such a good day the day before, and he wished all his days could be so good. He also saw firsthand what his buddies are doing, and what he "should" be doing, and that was difficult as well. He said seeing the college life, if only for a few hours, showed him how he is not ready to do it on his own yet. I think he knew that beforehand, but it was very clear seeing it for himself. Difficult to accept, of course. But we talked about that being temporary, and having a plan like he does (going to college locally at first) will prepare him for the future. I know overall it was a great trip for him, and he was happy he went. So was I.

Today, Darren asked if I could work with him on getting into bed, getting his legs up, taking off his pants, and positioning himself and moving on his bed. What a hour of hard work he put in! I didn't do too much, just was there to spot him, and offer encouragement and pointers. Every once in awhile, I helped, but only when he just couldn't do what he wanted after spending a lot of effort trying. His determination showed through once again. He wants to work toward getting himself into bed, and turning himself so I don't need to wake up and turn him 6 hours after he goes to bed. I do think he'll get it, but as with everything else, he needs to practice and perfect his techniques. It's a lot of planning and problem solving to figure out how to accomplish what he wants to do. But, again, he is determined and motivated, so I know he'll succeed. It was very difficult watching him and realizing his limitations, but I stayed focused on the positive and what he CAN do.

Since my updates are few and far between as of late, I can't remember the last information I relayed, but I believe it was that a finger on his left hand was moving. Is that correct? Well, I think so, and then just a few days after that, ANOTHER finger started moving on the other hand! Healing IS taking place, each and every day. The toes on his right foot can be moved at will, but nothing yet on the left foot. I do think that will happen soon, though. He continues to have good feeling and sensation in his legs and feet, and some inconsistent sensation in his mid-section. I do think his abs are starting to kick in, as his balance is improving. More work, more time, and more prayers, and who knows what can happen.

As the 25th anniversary of the 1980 "Miracle on Ice" USA Hockey Team is celebrated, let's keep praying for our own miracle for Darren's recovery. If a miracle can help a bunch of college players win the gold medal in Lake Placid, surely one can help Darren walk again. Please continue your prayers.

With love and hope,

Cynthia

March 4, 2005

Hello Everyone,

Well, its been a good week here at the Templeton's - Arianne got a good report from the Doctor and was allowed to shower and drive after her appointment this past Tuesday. Yea!!! She is working hard at therapy, and knows what it will take to regain her movement, strength and sports abilities. I have no doubt she will recover quickly.

It was a pretty uneventful week for Darren, which means routine happenings with no problems! He is feeling good, staying positive and working hard. His physical therapist is concentrating on working on "higher level" skills with him while at Kessler, and he can continue to practice and work on lower level skills while at home. Darren really wants to be more independent at night, getting into bed, undressing, etc. As usual, he is quite determined, and will succeed in time.

He did complete applications for Montclair University and Ramapo College, which were due March 1st. William Paterson's deadline is May 1st, so that one is still in progress. As soon as the weather breaks a bit, we will be taking tours of all three places.

Yesterday, Darren's "EZ Stand" arrived, after many delays. I thought it would take longer to build up to a standing position, since he hadn't done that in a few months, but after only about 30 minutes, he was upright, and continued to stand for another 45 minutes or so. Standing stretches out his hips and legs, gets his weight off his butt, and gets some weight-bearing on his legs as well. All good benefits, and very worthwhile to do as much as possible. Another activity to add to the list for things he can do at home.

So that's about it for now. We look forward to Casino Night tomorrow night, and seeing a lot of you there.

With love and prayers,

Cynthia

March 11, 2005

Hello everyone, and Happy Friday!

It has been a busy week here, with lots of news to report. Last Saturday, Casino Night was held, and I want to thank everyone who supported it - being there, sponsoring tables, donating items and gifts and services, organizing, etc. etc. It was a wonderful night, and if you were there, hopefully you heard both Morgan Coutts and Darren address the crowd. Morgan was precious, of course, and impressive at 10 years of age speaking to more than 350 people. By the way, our friends, Chris and Cheryl Coutts, and their friends Jim and Chris Caci, were very generous in adding Darren to the original cause of raising funds for Making Headway. This year, the proceeds were split between the two, and we are very appreciative of their efforts and the success of the evening. I was very proud of Darren, who wanted to speak, and he thanked everyone for coming and for the support of all of our friends. I really tried not to cry while listening to his voice, but of course, I was not successful. It was wonderful, nonetheless.

On Sunday, the day after, we had a manufacturer's rep bring a Honda Element to our house for us to see. A company in Michigan retrofits Elements to accommodate wheelchairs, and we got a chance to drive Darren's wheelchairs in and out of it, operate the automatic lift, drive it around, etc. It was a great opportunity to see it and see if it makes sense for Darren. We think it does, and since it takes about 3 months just to retrofit it, we ordered one, banking on Darren passing the driving program and being able to drive using assisted controls. We figured we would get a head start on the process, hoping everything will be in place for him to commute to college in September.

Speaking of college, I had hoped by now to have completed tours of the 3 colleges he is interested in, but Mother Nature had other plans! We will wait until the weather breaks a bit, then re-schedule the tours and see the campuses.

We did visit the YMCA in Mountain Lakes this week, and evaluated whether there is enough equipment there for Darren to use. He thinks there is, and we will be meeting with a personal trainer this week to brainstorm ideas on weight training and strengthening to supplement Darren's physical and occupational therapy. His therapy is going well, by the way, still going 3 times a week and working hard.

The EZ Stand also arrived since the last update, and Darren has been using it almost every day. It is SO good to see him upright and standing! He can stand in it for at least an hour at a time, sometimes longer. It is so good to stretch out his hips and legs, and put weight on his legs as well.

As for me, I started some interesting new things this past week. As I believe that things happen for a reason, this is just another example. I had to bring our van in for repairs, and our regular mechanic could not do the work since it is customized with the lowered floor, etc. So I brought it to Meineke on Route 23 North. Well, prior to that, I had been thinking about starting yoga classes, or trying it out, but hadn't asked around yet, or talked to my friends about where they were going. Well, driving into Meineke, there was a building back behind the strip mall that said in big letters "YOGA." What timing! I drove back there, only to find they were closed, but when I got home, I checked out their website and was quite impressed with their selection of classes. So on Monday I went for the first of a 2 part series on Meditation, then took a class on Wednesday night. I enjoyed both very much, and can see the benefits right away. (Don't think I got too carried away, though. I came home and ate a brownie!!!) It was difficult and challenging, but exhilarating and relaxing all at the same time. I plan on continuing, and if anyone is interested, let me know, because we can both get a free class if I refer anyone! So that is my news for the week!

In some of the literature I picked up at the yoga studio, one of the owners said that he has used "yoga and meditation to deal with the difficulties in life" and in doing so, "found that the larger the obstacle, the greater, and more unexpected, was the light that it shed, compelling him to see with brand new eyes, and opening to the joy of life." If I can learn to have that perspective, too, then I'll be better able to handle all that has been handed to me and to Darren, and to us as a family, and experience the joy that can be found in each and every day.

With love and prayers, and always thinking of all of those who support us, Cynthia

March 21, 2005

Hello everyone,

Last week, Darren's aide was sick and did not come on Thursday or Friday, so my schedule was a little off track. I had hoped to write an update then, but never did get to it. So here's one now!

The most exciting news lately was received in the mail on Saturday. William Paterson University is offering Darren a full tuition academic scholarship! That is SO wonderful! Of course, he is still considering Ramapo and Montclair, and we have to see which campus best fits his needs, but what an offer! We are so proud of him.

Tonight, he takes his mid-term exam for his on-line Philosophy course, so we'll see how that goes. And he's thinking of taking one or two summer courses as well.

Last week was a busy week, with Darren having a few medical appointments in addition to his therapy. The good news is that the visits and tests for urology and radiology all came up clear - no problems. No urology issues, and no blood clots, a constant worry. Thank goodness.

Not so good was Ari's report from her knee surgeon. She has developed a lot of scar tissue, and is not able to straighten or bend her knee as she should by now. So frequent stretching and riding a stationary bike, in addition to therapy 5 days a week, has us both a little crazy. Her in terms of the pain she's in, and me for the scheduling aspect. Sometimes I feel like I need a secretary to keep all of this straight! And she's still being treated for the TMJ as well. But if she really works her knee for the next 2 weeks, it should improve. At least the doctor said it was not as bad as other knees he's seen with the same kind of problem. More prayers, please, for Arianne!

On one of the spinal cord websites I frequent, I read about a book that uses land and water exercises to improve a person's recovery process. I bought a copy and was so excited reading about the recovery of some of the people this doctor has treated. There are no guarantees, of course, but the book is written in such a positive and encouraging way, that it's hard not to get excited about it. Following the ideas in this book, together with hiring a personal trainer, will be a new focus for Darren and something new to motivate him. I am still waiting to hear whether we can use the pool at Cedar Crest, so as soon as that happens, we can get him in the water and see what he can do. It will be so good for him to stretch his muscles, float and whatever else he is capable of. Then as soon as the weather is nice enough for us to use our own pool, he can be in the water that much more. As with any exercise routine for all of us, keeping it fresh and changing it up a bit is very worthwhile.

An announcement to all you GOLFERS out there! The Newton Country Club is hosting their annual charitable tournament on Tuesday, June 14th. A portion of the proceeds will be split among three recipients, and Darren will be one of those. Thanks to our good friends, Lucille and Ralph Rathyen (and Darren's Godfather, too!), Darren has been included. Here are the details that I know so far: Date is Tuesday, June 14th. Cost will be approx. \$100. It is for men and women golfers, and will include a barbeque lunch followed by a prime rib dinner in the evening with a 2 hour open bar. People can participate in the tournament and the dinner or just attend the dinner for a lesser fee. Golfers will get a cart, and there will be prizes and a hole-in-one prize (possibly a car). I don't know about the cost of just the dinner yet. More details will follow, but please set aside the date if you are interested. We are trying to figure out if Darren can ride in a golf cart that day.....we'll see! In the meantime, any questions can be directed to Lucille at [lural@optonline.net](mailto:lural@optonline.net).

While it seems like we are in a holding pattern right now with Darren's condition and progress, we remain hopeful that there is still healing to come. With the support of our family and friends, and especially Darren's "best buds" who have been wonderful, I know we can remain positive and do everything we can to promote healing and recovery.

With love, hope and prayers,

Cynthia



March 28, 2005

Hello everyone,

There was so much going on this past week, that I had to make myself a list to follow before composing this e-mail. Hopefully I'll get it all in!

Last Tuesday was a very hard day for Darren. Some negative comments from his PT at Kessler when Darren was excitedly telling him about the Burdenko Method of land and water exercises (they don't tell you about all the people the program doesn't help, the therapist had the nerve to point out. Like we don't know that ourselves....), then a fall backward while in his chair practicing wheelies (the OT walked away and Darren didn't know it). So it was a not a good day, but we talked a lot about positive thinking, good attitude and not letting others bring us down. No one is going to take our hope away.

Wednesday brought Darren's birthday, and also the 8th month anniversary of his injury. A much more positive day, as while Darren was at a massage therapist, she could feel his left hamstring contract. Yea! What wonderful news. I could feel it also, and so could Darren. Then on his back, she was massaging and manipulating a muscle in the pelvic area, and his left leg moved while she was doing that - exactly what she said "should" happen. More good news! Wednesday also brought a snowstorm that I feared might keep his friends away, (I planned a small surprise party) but of course, it did not! We had dinner, cake and then they played poker into the wee hours of the next morning. I'd like to take a moment here to mention how wonderful Darren's friends are and have been. It is a testimony to their personalities and their concern for Darren, and also to their upbringing that they have been here for Darren every step of the way. What a great bunch of young men. I am happy to have them around, even if it is until 2 am!

Thursday was a better day at therapy. Darren chose not to address the two incidents on Tuesday, preferring to see what happens in the future. He knows now to check and double-check if someone is behind him now practicing wheelies, though!

My sister, Michele, drove Darren to Kessler on Friday, so that gave them some time together, which was nice. That afternoon, John & I went furniture shopping in Paramus to find bedroom furniture for Darren's old room, which is now pretty empty after moving most of his furniture into the new room. We were successful, so that was a good use of time. Thanks, Michele!

On Saturday, we went to see the Big Apple Circus in Bridgewater with the Gordon family. We didn't know what to expect, but it was great! The talents and skills were pretty awesome, from the jugglers, to the acrobats and the gymnasts. From a guy juggling ping-pong balls from his mouth (really!) to another balancing porcelain vases (big ones!) on his head, it was quite entertaining. So thanks for the idea, Carol. We all had a good time.

Right after the circus, we headed to the Bantam Hockey Team's end-of-year party, where the kids and parents were gathered for food and fun. It was a very nice party, where the parents had wonderful things to say about Darren's participation in the program this year. I told them that Darren enjoyed working with their kids as much as the kids enjoyed having Darren around, so it was a win-win situation. They are trying to recruit him to help coach the spring season....we'll see!

Arianne went with me to Church on Sunday, and I was very happy about that. Of course, it was very crowded, being Easter Sunday, and I was able to introduce her to a few people that I now see each week. It was a very nice service, and nice to chat with friends afterward. Later in the afternoon, we headed to my sister's for dinner, and had a nice relaxing afternoon/evening with good food, a few games and Darren's birthday celebration. Of course, we sang, took pictures and he blew out candles. He doesn't put up much of a fuss to indulge his mother's wishes.....it was a very nice day all around.

Well, I think I did what we warn our kids not to - I ate too much candy yesterday! My stomach wasn't feeling too good, but then neither was my head and throat, so I needed a little extra rest today. I feel OK, but not great, just hoping some sun will come out and cheer me up. We could all use that!

So much for our last week. As I said, lots going on. I think this week will be a bit less busy, but with a full weekend coming up - visits to both William Paterson and Montclair, and a gathering of our Devils friends Saturday night. So we'll make up for a less-than-hectic week on Saturday and Sunday. But it will be good stuff!

Some bits of information - After Friday, April 15th, Darren will be going to Kessler only 2 times a week, Tues and Thursdays. So if there's anyone available to help drive on Tuesdays, I will accept all offers! Its a bit of a longer day on Tuesday, since Darren goes to the fitness center at Kessler after therapy, but we usually get back to Kinnelon by 4:30. If you can help, that would be great. Just e-mail me directly, though, at [cynthiat@optonline.net](mailto:cynthiat@optonline.net).

Second, the bank account has been set up for the trust created for Darren. So anyone that's been holding onto funds that were raised for him, we have a place at last to put them! Thank you for your patience, and of course, for raising them to begin with! The thanks we have for everyone who has been involved from the very beginning is never-ending. We hope you all know how much we appreciate your efforts.

I think this might be my longest e-mail update yet! As always, I enjoy writing and sharing what's going on here at 8 Honeysuckle Lane. It helps me keep things in perspective, reminds me of all the good and positive things that happen over the course of a week, and keeps me in touch with those who care about Darren (and all of us, too!).

Until next time, with love, hope and prayers,

Cynthia

March 30, 2005

Hello-I know you all haven't heard from me in a long time. I've been quite busy, but now I'm getting back into the swing of things. A few of you may remember the name Paul Rudat, a teenager from upstate New York who had a similar injury to Darren's. He was getting his rehab at the Shepherd Center in Atlanta, where we eventually wound up. Our family became very close with Paul, and his Mom, Jean. Eventually the boys were roommates, until Paul was able to return home. He's been progressing steadily at home, and right now they are planning on having what we refer to as the "Portugal Procedure" done. (For information about the procedure, go here:

[http://www.freep.com/news/health/ericanader4e\\_20050104.htm](http://www.freep.com/news/health/ericanader4e_20050104.htm))

However, their family needs to raise about \$50,000 in order for any of this to happen. They are planning a huge garage/yard sale for a weekend in June, and pepping it up with food, entertainment, and hayrides. I am going up to visit them this weekend, and since it was such a last minute plan, I'm asking for some last minute help. If anyone has anything that they are willing to donate to this wonderful cause, please let me know. I would really love to pull up to their house with a carload of stuff for them. I do need everything before Friday afternoon though. If there is any way that anything could be dropped off at my house, or somehow that I could pick stuff up, please let me know! The easiest way to reach me is by my cell phone: 201.400.5383, or if you just want to drop something off before Friday afternoon, just call the house line at 973.492.1654, or email me directly at [atempleton@optonline.net](mailto:atempleton@optonline.net) I would really appreciate anything that you would be willing to donate, and I know Paul and his family would also. Thank you SO much!

Love always, Ari