

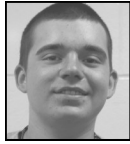
WOKSAPE

"The Wise Book"

Volume 92, Number 6

Monday, January 21, 2013

Parker Kuchta Marks Tenth Year Since Surgery Plays Sports After Overcoming Arteriovenous Malformation Diagnosis



BY
NICK
ROBINSON

As he and a classmate were scrapping for the ball during recess in 2002, Parker Kuchta took off at a dead sprint.

He was then tripped from behind and immediately skyrocketed to the ground head first.

A simple game of elementary school soccer impacted Kuchta's life forever.

The Yankton High School sophomore faced an obstacle that millions of people will never have to overcome.

"I had a weird feeling all day long, I don't know why," Kuchta's mother, Jill Robinson said. "I got a call from the school saying he had fallen and that he had just thrown up."

After the call, Robinson and her husband Randy rushed to pick Parker up from the school and immediately took him to the emergency room.

"I knew something was up right away," Robinson said. "His speech slurred and he was losing consciousness."

After a few hours of taking tests at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, the doctors made a decision that saved Kuchta's life; they flew him to Sioux Falls via helicopter to be examined by specialists.

The family waited hours to get information about his condition. After talking to numerous doctors from the nation's top hospitals, doctors diagnosed Kuchta with an Arteriovenous Malformation, commonly known as an AVM.

An AVM is an abnormal connection between arteries and veins. It is also typically dated back to birth, which is Kuchta's case. The AVM appears as a tangle of abnormal arteries and veins, a clot of some sort. In very serious cases when the blood vessels rupture, it can cause bleeding of the brain.

After verification, the family agreed to a tremendously long surgery that could potentially take the kindergartner's life.

"I really didn't know what was going on at the time," Kuchta said. "I was so young and everything happened so fast."

Now, the process of finding a doctor to perform such a treacherous surgery on a young child was the next obstacle facing the Kuchta family.

"Once we figured out that it was for sure an AVM, only three doctors in the whole nation would do the surgery," Robinson said. "Because of the size of the tumor and how old Parker was turned away many doctors. The three spots where the surgery could take place was in Dayton, Ohio, Miami, Florida, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota."

The family stayed in South Dakota and met with Dr. Wilson Asfora.

It was Thanksgiving Day. The Kuchta family spent the day in a hospital waiting room for over 13 hours.

The blueprint for the operation was to break the surface of the brain and remove the malformed arteries. Dr. Asfora and his team also were going to remove small portions of the arteries and perform many different angiograms on separate occasions.

"I was a nervous wreck," Robinson said. "They called and updated as much as they could. The phone would ring for another patient and it was scary. I would pace the halls trying to find anyone who had any information, it was just so intense."

There was a significant chance that the doctors could not reach all of the abnormal arteries and veins. The team of physicians warned the family that their son would probably come out with side effects due to the procedure. The side effects could have been paralysis, numbness in body parts, or stroke-like symptoms.

"We would not know how successful the surgery was for weeks until after the swelling went down," Robinson said. "They put him in a coma and we just prayed and prayed for the best."

With the surgery finally over, Kuchta saw his family for the first time.

"It was all a blur to me," Kuchta said. "I can only remember bits and pieces."

As weeks passed, Kuchta began to be very popular, warming the hearts of nurses and doctors alike at the children's hospital in Sioux Falls.

What would a five-year old child want for his first real meal after having brain surgery?

Most would think a Happy Meal from McDonalds.

But for Kuchta, it was an order of Pizza Hut breadsticks, which became a new favorite for him.

"I was so happy to finally eat normal food," Kuchta said. "After that I was thinking that I just wanted all of those needles to be out of my body."

The day finally came when Dr. Asfora performed tests that would calculate Kuchta's responses and reactions.

Dr. Asfora and his council discussed the tests and explained to the family that Parker would have little to no side-effects from the surgery.

"He said the chances of him coming out the way he did were like winning the lottery twice in a row," Robinson said. "He also said he was surprised at how good of a job he did."

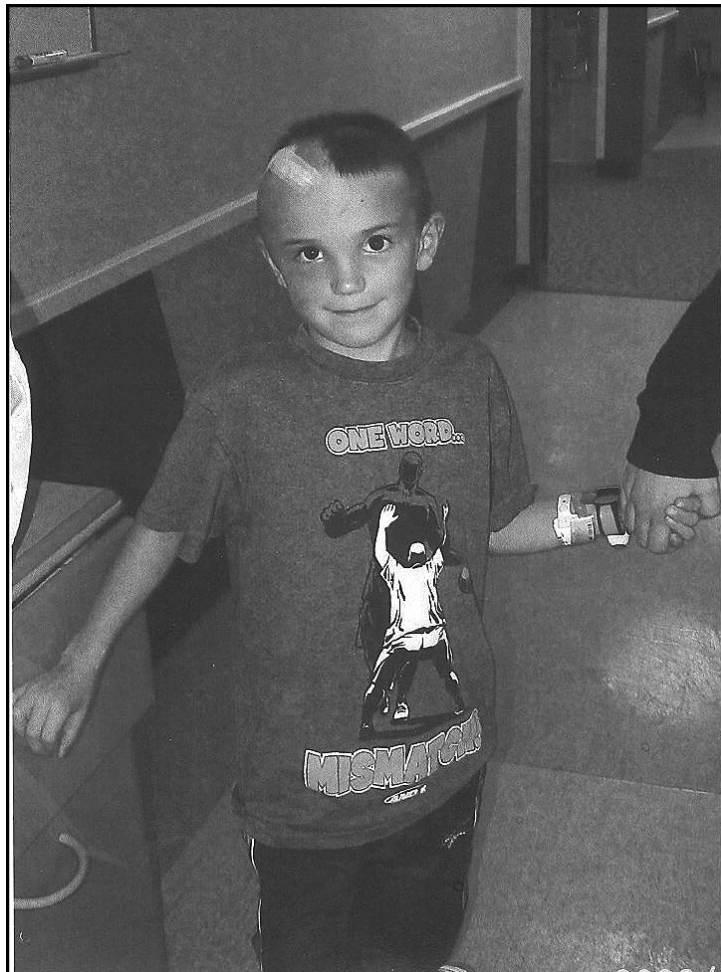
Kuchta's battle was far from over, now came the recovery process. One slip or fall, and he could have potentially changed the outcome of his life.

After not being able to spend his sixth birthday at home, Kuchta was finally released from the hospital weeks after the surgery. He was greeted by friends and family alike, receiving all kinds of letters and gifts, some from people he did not even know.

The Kansas City Chiefs football organization even sent Kuchta an autographed football of the team and a life sized autographed poster of star running back Priest Holmes. He also got gifts from the New England Patriots.

Kuchta has been in contact with Senator Tim Johnson over the years. Johnson also suffered from an AVM and had more severe side-effects than Kuchta.

"It was unbelievable," Robinson said. "That's the nice thing



COURTESY PHOTOS

Top: Yankton sophomore, Parker Kuchta, is shown at the Bucks' half court line. He is able to play sports after beating medical odds.

Bottom: Parker Kuchta is shown leaving the hospital in December of 2002. Kuchta, a sophomore, recently experienced the tenth anniversary of his arteriovenous malformation (AVM) surgery.

about living in this area, we had so much support. I can't even describe it."

The doctors provided the Kuchta's with many things to read and study to insure the safety of their son.

"I was scared I was going to hit my head," Kuchta said. "But, I was so relieved to be home."

Continuous therapy and hands-on work with Kuchta helped speed up the recovery. Kuchta experienced only minimal hearing loss and a slight speech impediment.

Kuchta was given a snowboarding helmet with extra cushioning to be worn at all times, expect sleeping. He was required to sleep on two couches combined, so there was no chance of falling and rupturing his incision.

As the time passed, Kuchta grew stronger and stronger, and finally, his life was back to the way it once was. But, he was missing one thing in his young life that he once cherished, sports.

At a doctor's appointment, Kuchta urged his parents to ask the doctors what they thought about him playing sports.

"Basketball was okay, but absolutely no baseball or hockey," Robinson said. "We made an agreement that if two of the three doctors would allow their kids to play football that we would let Parker play."

After different opinions and options, the family made another tough decision, to let Kuchta play football.

"I hoped that he would not like it at all or that he would not be good," Robinson said. "But, I mean to see him now; it just makes me so happy. Don't get me wrong though, anytime he suits up, I get really nervous."

The only remaining indication of a life-threatening surgery would be the scar from the incision on the side of Kuchta's head.

This past November was the tenth anniversary of his surgery, and as Kuchta looks back, it provides him with motivation.

"Wow, I can't believe how time flies," Kuchta said. "I feel like this whole thing was only a couple years ago."

Spectators can catch Kuchta running on the football field in the fall, where he plays for the Bucks varsity football team.

Kuchta also is on the sophomore basketball team for the 2012-2013 season.

In his spare time, he spends the majority of it hunting wild game. Kuchta also enjoys playing Xbox 360 and fighting with his younger brother, Cooper.

"We had a guardian angel watching over us," Robinson said.

"He had so many things going against him and for him to come out the way he did was unbelievable."

Y's Words on Conrad's Clan and Yankton High School's Support



BY
ASHLEY
EILERS

In a world full of busy people, it is refreshing to see our state, nation, and world coming together to support a student from Pierre, South Dakota. Conrad Adam, a junior at T.F. Riggs High School, is the son of Karl and Joan Adam.

On Aug. 1., 2012, Conrad was diagnosed with a rare bone cancer known as Osteosarcoma in his left femur. Osteosarcoma is a cancerous bone tumor that develops in teens during adolescence.

Based on his diagnosis, the doctors prescribed 30 weeks of chemotherapy and surgery. The

cancerous tumor was 8 inches round and consumed 40% of his knee. Due to the fact that the tumor was too big to save his

leg, Conrad made the difficult decision to have his leg amputated.

On Oct. 23., 2012, Conrad underwent surgery to remove a portion of his leg approximately three inches above his knee. The surgery took place in Rochester, Minn. at Mayo St. Mary's Hospital. Throughout the process, his parents stated he had a very positive outlook.

On Monday November 5, 2012, Conrad and his parents traveled to Houston, Texas to The University of Texas, MD Anderson Cancer Center to check into proton radiation.

The Mayo Clinic in Rochester did not offer proton radiation, and his radiation oncologist believed it would be the best treatment for him. Conrad spent his Christmas in Texas where he received proton radiation for 10 weeks.

Conrad finished this treatment last Wednesday, Jan. 9.

After the radiation treatment, Conrad and his family traveled back home to Pierre, South Dakota.

Conrad's proton radiation went well, and he is scheduled for four more months of chemotherapy in Rochester, Minn..

Karl Adam, Conrad's father, indicated some of his chemotherapy will also take place at Sanford in Sioux Falls.

After the chemotherapy treatments are completed, they will return to Texas for more tests.

Karl stated they are traveling to Rochester where they will meet with Dr. Andrews for rehabilitation and to fit and cast his leg. Conrad will also get to select his prosthetic leg while they are at Mayo Clinic.

Conrad plays forward/guard on the Pierre Governors' basketball team and is an excellent player. He attended an athletic training program at TMB, LLC and was one of their finest members.

Conrad's coach Pierre Governor head coach, Terry Becker, said, "He is our go-to player when we get into tough situations."

According to friends and family, Conrad is a very positive kid, and he always keeps his spirits high.

Conrad said, "The amputation of my leg will not slow me down but will help me towards recovery."

Along with many other schools throughout the world, Yankton High School is showing their support of

Conrad's fight against cancer by selling green t-shirts for \$15 to help raise money for the Adam Family. The t-shirts

have the following message printed on them: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," Philippians 4:13. This is one of Conrad's favorite scriptures.

The student body at T.F. Riggs High School started a group called "Conrad's Clan" which is where the t-shirt fundraiser idea first began.

The shirts are to be worn on Saturday February 16, 2013, when Pierre's boys' basketball team plays Yankton.

According to Yankton High School's Athletic Director, Mr. Mors, \$2,400 will be going to the Adam family to help them pay for their medical bills.

Mr. Mors said, "I think it is a fantastic gesture to both him and his family. It is the least we can do in this situation to provide financial help."

In response to the outpouring of donations from all over the world, Conrad stated on the SD Sports Talk blog, "I am overwhelmed with the wonderful support I am receiving from everyone, and I cannot begin to thank everyone enough!"

Karl stated, "This is Conrad's full time focus, and he is staying very strong and positive."

He added, "Being his Dad and biggest fan, I am pleased to say that Conrad is keeping his spirits high and doing very well."

Writing this article was inspiring, and it really touched my heart to actually speak with Conrad's Dad on the phone.

On behalf of the students at Yankton High School, I ended my conversation by telling Karl we wish Conrad and your family all the best.



Steamway

CLEANING & RESTORATION



Bruce Tirrel
IICRC Certified Master Textile Cleaner & Restorer

IICRC CERTIFIED FIRM

Satisfaction Guaranteed

24hr. Emergency Response TEAM!

VISA

"THE AREA'S LARGEST CLEANING & RESTORATION COMPANY"

- Carpets
- Upholstery
- Duct Cleaning
- Water Restoration
- Fire Restoration
- Mold Testing & Remediation
- Tile & Grout Cleaning

"Excellent job! My friend asked me if we installed new carpet."
Gail

WATER • SMOKE • FIRE FREE ESTIMATES
(ask for details)

Mitchell 996-6921	Yankton 665-5700	Chamberlain 734-0733
Vermillion 624-4666	Huron 352-5252	Sioux Falls 334-1991

Toll Free 1-800-529-2450
www.steamwaycleaning.com

MasterCard