

My Miracle Son

Pamela Jackson's story

On January 15 2013 my life changed. John my 15 year old son was struck down by a car whilst riding his push bike. His friend who was riding some distance behind yelled out as his bike chain come off. John being indestructible and responding instantly turned to his mate, during that split second he turned in front of a four wheel drive.

The cars' driver swerved in an effort to avoid him but John took the full force of the impact to his head. He was hit and unable to move, barely conscious and to this day has no recollection of the accident. John was attended to by the police, ambulance and then due to the seriousness of his injuries was air lifted by the RAC helicopter to Royal Perth Hospital (RPH).



Upon arrival to RPH John was experiencing a large bleed to his brain; he was rushed to theatre with a 2% chance of survival. Not long after this I was contacted and told of the events and drama rapidly unfolding. I went into shock and from this point on my life has been in a rapid state of flux. I remember the team coming out of theatre with grins on their faces and the neurosurgeon commented "He not only survived the operation but has more than cleared the bar". John had a large section of the right hand side of his skull removed to control the bleed to his brain. He was to be placed in a coma for 8 days in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). I saw nothing in that ward of horror except my son, so fragile, so vulnerable.

Early the next morning was my induction into what would become a common occurrence - Johns' head did not look right, its' shape was changing and as terror gripped me I saw the concern on the faces of staff and a decided change of pace, things were happening very fast. I demanded "What is happening?" they responded hurriedly that he was having a major bleed on the other side of his brain and the surgeons were scrubbing up for immediate surgery. I held Johns' hand and kept telling him how much I loved him and begged him not to leave me. One and a half hours into a three hour operation the team appeared, I knew it was not good, we were ushered into a small room there were so many faces and none of them offered a glimpse of hope. "We are sorry, we lost your son on the operating table, he is dead".

Advocacy Training Awareness

645 Canning Highway Alfred Cove West Australia 6156
T: (08) 9330 6370 Freecall: 1800 626370 F: (08) 9317 2264
admin@headwest.asn.au <http://www.headwest.asn.au>

Time ceased to exist; Johns' organs were to be taken in 48 hours. His friends came into ICU in groups of up to 8 to say goodbye. My grief was unbearable. I don't remember the next 46 hours then only a short time before "Harvest" I received a call from RPH the voice said "It's about your son, HE'S ALIVE!"

The rollercoaster ride was well and truly in motion. John had 'storming episodes' some lasting for up to 5 hours at a time where his temperature could peak at over 40 degrees. He would have tachycardia (profuse sweating and tremors), aspiration pneumonia tonic clonic seizures, hemiplegia of the left hand side and cortical blindness, you were in and out of ICU, had gastric tubes pulled out put back in, peg tubes in and out, filters and shunts malfunctioning and more infections and surgery than I care to remember. A caring phone call from a friend would set my heart racing, I was programmed to devastating news, days off work, and calls from RPH sudden trips into Perth to be by my son's bedside to support him and encourage him with the few resources I could now muster.

A cautious move to Shenton Park Rehabilitation Hospital, then back again to RPH, then again to Shenton Park and eventually to his new home at a residential care facility. Still no prognosis just "You will have to take it day by day with John, we just don't know". Life is on hold, there is no future I can plan for, and I am in a constant state of adjusting to ever changing situations. I am experiencing a new 'ALONENESS' that is frightening and challenging, I cling to hope and my faith in something greater than myself to make some kind of sense to this madness and restore my son to the life that was taken from him so suddenly in an act of childlike innocence.

John now requires the expertise of a Neuro Physiotherapist, ligament surgery, serial casting and I have come up against yet another dilemma 'LACK OF FUNDING and RESOURCES' as John is not eligible for compensation. My son has been told he will not live, yet he lives, he will not speak, yet he speaks, he will never use his left hand side again yet it is functioning. What else can he achieve? I might never know....I can't afford the rehabilitation costs.

My son has put up such a battle that has left Surgeons, Registrars, Physiotherapists, Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and nursing staff dumbfounded. He is in the fight of his life and just when he needs every bit of help he can get it seems the rug has been pulled from under him. I believe that what you put in to something is what you get out of it. John has come this far ONLY because of the positive input, the constant encouragement and as a result of this his determination to recover. Now is surely not the time to place him in the TOO HARD BASKET?

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