

Good Samaritan saves boy's life

Drives injured child to hospital after playground mishap

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Sheri Lypko looks down at the hospital bed into her son's sparkling big brown eyes and mouths a little prayer of thanks.

The young Burlington mother is grateful for the quick work of the staff at Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital, thankful for the care he received at Children's Hospital at Chedoke-McMaster. But she is most beholden to a stranger, a Good Samaritan who drove the frantic mother and son to hospital.

Lypko has said a lot of prayers during the 13 days since her four-year-old son, Brennan, fell off a jungle gym in a park and seriously injured his head.

Brennan's injuries were so severe emergency staff at Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital could only stabilize him and quickly transfer him to Hamilton.

Doctors said the brain surgery would be so delicate they could only give her only child a 50-50 chance of survival.

Brennan's father, Craig, was on a business trip to Las Vegas. He was unable to get a direct flight back to Toronto and spent almost 12 hours in various airports rushing to get home.

Sheri never knew she had as many emotions as those that surfaced following the accident on a Saturday afternoon. At first, she felt guilt, panic, fear, anger, despair and then 72 hours of uncertainty, followed by joy, ecstasy and finally gratitude.

On April 18, she and a friend Lynn McInnis took Brennan for a walk and, on their way home, stopped at Lansdown Park so he could climb on the jungle gym.

“He had climbed it already and wanted to do it one more time,” Sheri said. “We watched him get to the top and I turned to my friend and we heard him fall. He was lying on his back and was crying.

“I picked him up. He said his head hurt but then the crying stopped. His eyes were rolling back in his head, his body was rigid and his jaw was clamped shut.”

She didn't know whether to run to a nearby house and call an ambulance. But her instinct was to get the injured boy to hospital and fast. Sheri's friend ran to the road, flagged down a van on Palmer Drive and asked the female driver if she would drive them to hospital.

“I was so upset because his breathing was like a gurgling,” said the boy's mother. “This woman was wonderful. She tried to keep me calm. She kept telling me she was driving as

fast as she could without getting us all killed on the way."

After arriving at the hospital, the mysterious woman left.

"You hear about the bad people, but there are an awful lot of good people out there, too," Lypko said.

"This woman was one of those really good people. I don't know her name. I know nothing about her, except she drove a white van and said she had three children of her own."

Some people would have been intimidated by being flagged down. Not a lot of people could have handled all that as well as having two women in her van hysterical.

"I really want to thank this woman. The hospital staff said the time frame was crucial. The fact this woman didn't turn us away and brought us to the hospital saved Brennan's life."

At Children's Hospital, Brennan was operated on to remove a blood clot on his brain. He remained in an induced coma for 72 hours in the intensive care unit. When he regained consciousness, his head was swollen, tubes were stuck down his throat and his first words were "help me."

On Sunday, eight days after he arrived at the Hamilton hospital, Brennan was transferred to a ward.

"Now he's starting to do everything by himself," his mother said. "His speech and communication is about the same as it was before we brought him in here."

"He'll probably be going home this weekend. They say his damage is minimal."

With physiotherapy, the Lypkos figure this summer Brennan will be back swimming, playing soccer and doing all the things he used to do.

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