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## David Hudgik's Journal

**Friday, March 16, 2012 12:16 PM, EDT**

### New Guestbook

David has a new guestbook at <http://www.davidsjourneytorecovery.com>. It's very simple to use. You don't have to supply your email address or any personal info. Post a message and let David know that you're thinking of him.

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**Thursday, March 15, 2012 11:43 AM, EDT**

### David's Website

Hi everyone.

You may have noticed that the journal entries on this CaringBridge site have slowed down. This Website is winding down and all updates will only be available either on David's facebook page, [David's Journey to Recovery](#), or on his Website at [www.davidsjourneytorecovery.com](http://www.davidsjourneytorecovery.com)

To get the latest updates about David and his recovery visit his Website at <http://www.davidsjourneytorecovery.com>. You can see David's story there, read updates, keep up with fundraising events and find information about how to donate to David's fundraising campaign. [www.davidsjourneytorecovery.com](http://www.davidsjourneytorecovery.com) will be updated on a regular basis. Check out David's new ski photo page! <http://www.davidsjourneytorecovery.com/skipictures.html>

Please help support David by sharing [www.davidsjourneytorecovery.com](http://www.davidsjourneytorecovery.com) with everyone you know.

Thanks.

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### **Wednesday, February 22, 2012 8:50 AM, EST**

If you've seen Dave's FB page then, you know he went to Granite Gorge this past Sunday. It was a perfect afternoon to hang out on the deck in the sunshine and visit with lots of friends. He even got a ride on the chair lift! It was his first trip to Keene in five months and it couldn't have been better : )

We also had a rather large after-ski crowd stop by for a Chinese food extravaganza on Monday - thank you Ebbighausens and Cotters!

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### **Tuesday, January 31, 2012 10:09 AM, EST**

Hi Everyone! I wanted to update the Caringbridge followers! David, Barbara and Emily are officially back in NH! They arrived on Saturday in Boston. Dave is staying at the Crotched Mtn Rehab facility in Greenfield, NH. Its not known how long Dave will be at Crotched. We are still in desperate search for a home. In the mean time Emily is staying over night with Dave and Barbara is there everyday, but spending the night with some friends who live close by the facility. It is so wonderful to have them back in NH! Dave can get visitors anytime!!

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### **Tuesday, January 17, 2012 2:16 PM, EST**

Definitely done with day program on the 27th - will be booking flight for home this afternoon. Not sure if Dave will end up at Crotched Mountain Rehab or, if not, we'll be at the Holiday Inn Express in Keene while we come up with some other living arrangements.

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### **Wednesday, January 11, 2012 2:02 PM, EST**

We went to Best Buy last night on an outing and, right now, I think Dave's being convinced to go on tonight's trip to a bookstore! His friend, Christian, is the only one signed up and he wants some company!

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### **Monday, January 2, 2012 8:30 PM, EST**

Here's what a typical weekday is like for Dave: Somewhere between 6:30 and 7 wake up and spend then next couple of hours with stretching, showering, dressing and breakfasting - not necessarily in that order! On the schedule for

tomorrow, (Tuesday), is: 9 – 10, stretching with mom; 10 – 11, occupational therapy (usually upper body work); 11 – 12 e-stim (electrical stimulation) with mom – yes, I get to apply electric currents to him! 12 – 1, lunch; 1 – 2, Fitness IV Mat Class with Kelly (don't know what this is, it will be his first time); 2 – 3, recreational therapy; 3 – 4, physical therapy and we will finish with some reiki at the apartment at 4:15. This week Dave also has the Lokomat on M, W, Th and Fri, aquatic therapy in the pool on Wed., FES bike for 2 hours on Thurs and this week's Fun Friday activity will take place in the auditorium where they will watch a movie while doing a therapy activity – Dave's will be FES bike.

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## **Friday, December 30, 2011 1:20 PM, EST**

Hey, for those of you who are familiar with the Cape Cod collegiate baseball teams, there's a young man here named Jonathon who played with the Cotuit team a couple of summers ago. He acquired his SPI at C5, which was shattered, and C6, while playing baseball this past March. He and another player were running after a fly ball and they collided. I think Jonathon's head hit the other guy's hip. He is from this area and has been coming to Shepherd since he got hurt. His mom was inspired to create an exercise to help strengthen his core muscles which are very difficult ones to get back. She went to Toys R Us to find something like a mini soccer ball which she would place behind his back while he was sitting in his chair, then he and his mom would hit a beach ball back and forth.

Today Dave had the second round of botox injections. This time the area near his shoulder blade didn't need too much but the area of the chest that's next to the shoulder and armpit was very tight so he got more botox there this time.

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## **Thursday, December 29, 2011 10:39 AM, EST**

More big news...we've been extended to Jan. 27th, too!

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## **Thursday, December 29, 2011 10:32 AM, EST**

I'm finally back from my holiday break! David has continued to work every day except for Saturday and Sunday. Yesterday was a true 9-to-5 day filled with the usual physical and occupational therapies as well as another session on the lokomat. If you use Facebook, go to David's Journey to Recovery and you can watch a video of Dave on the lokomat. He also spent an hour in the pool along with his Dad afterwards. The heater hadn't been working so the water wasn't the usual 93 degrees, only 86, which is rather chilly for people with spinal cord injuries. Dave did manage to stay in for the whole session though.

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## **Sunday, December 25, 2011 9:44 PM, EST**

It was a very merry Christmas and to all a good night!

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## **Friday, December 23, 2011 4:36 PM, EST**

Ahh, Friday and Christmas Eve eve. Dave is the last of the original crew still here - Jay left yesterday and Tyler today. Ben and Jimmy will be back after the holiday break. Dave will be using the loco-mat next week as a special treat. It's like an exo-skeleton that you stand upright in and it makes you walk on a treadmill! While Dave was on the tilt-table this afternoon, I went to the fourth floor to see Jeannie and Scott. Jeannie is doing much better and was in the gym playing a video game with three others and Scott is also much better and back in his room!

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### **Wednesday, December 21, 2011 11:07 AM, EST**

Yesterday was one of those 'if-it-could-go-wrong-it-did' days! Despite the kinks, Dave did make a lovely flower arrangement involving a bamboo plant and a plastic frog in Recreational Therapy. We both visited Scott who is still in the ICU, waiting for his blood pressure to cooperate and Jeannie, who is out of ICU. She also was having low blood pressure issues but hers has resolved. Em, Dave and I received the gift of a lovely dinner from Scott and his wife, Sandy! She always eats at a Cracker Barrel on her way to Shepherd, so Scott said we could pick out whatever we wanted and she would order it and bring it to us! The staff at Cracker Barrel know her well and wondered why she was ordering three take-out meals. She told them about us and the manager gave her a discount and lots of extra biscuits! It was all delicious and a very welcome treat - thank you, Scott and Sandy.

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### **Monday, December 19, 2011 1:15 PM, EST**

Dave's at the movies this afternoon and Emily and Brittany took the bus to the aquarium. Like the airport, it is supposed to be the largest in the country and right next door is The World of Coke since Coca-Cola is headquartered in Atlanta. It's a beautiful day so they all should be having a good time. I'm going to find a post office and then take a walk!

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### **Sunday, December 18, 2011 5:29 PM, EST**

We did our first ride on the Marta bus yesterday afternoon and went to the Lenox Square Mall. Not the smartest time to go to a mall since it was the last weekend before Christmas! The five mile ride took about 35 minutes and the sidewalk where we got off was kind of chopped up so we had to be in the road, briefly. Needless to say, the amount of cars at the mall was insane. There were policemen directing traffic at the intersection to the mall and right in front of the mall. We made it in, dove into Macy's, decided to head back since it was after 4:30 already and we weren't sure where to catch the bus. People who were trying to get anywhere in cars were having a very tough time of it and some of them were getting rather beligerent with the officers who were directing traffic. Yikes! We made it out, found the stop and got home just before six. We did find out that it's really easy to ride the bus with a wheelchair and,if we can do it on a day like yesterday, we can do it anytime.

Today, Dave was up bright and early for some reason and in his chair by 7:30. I hope he can repeat this on Tuesday since we have an 8am appointment. He spent some time on the computer while I went to the store and then this afternoon we went to the church service again. Afterwards, we went to visit our friend Scott and found out that he's in the ICU. Since his surgery this past week he's had trouble with low blood pressure but he is getting better and enjoyed our visit. We also wanted to stop in and see Jeannie and found out that she is in the ICU as well. She's been having a hard time dealing with her situation and who can blame her? She sounded depressed and didn't want to visit but she did thank us for coming.

Dave, Emily and Brittany are out and about but should be coming back pretty soon.

Oh, and thanks to all who have sent cards and Christmas gifts. They look so pretty under our little, fiber optic tree.

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### **Thursday, December 15, 2011 11:28 AM, EST**

Great time at airport yesterday. It started off with a bang, because as we were driving on the highway and by all the enormous airport parking lots, we were all startled by a roaring sound - we all thought something was going wrong with the bus but it was a jet coming in for a landing extremely close to the ground and right over us! The hardest part of the whole process for us was getting his two packs off the wheelchair so they could get scanned. We really held things up and it took two different people wrestling with the straps for about 10 minutes before they finally came off! We got to board a 737 with the help of "Tiny" who is 6'7". He and another person lifted Dave out of his chair and into the transport wheelchair which is narrow enough to fit the aisle of the plane and then they place him in his seat. We were also served water and airplane snacks: the usual cookies emblazoned with "Delta", peanuts and pretzels. Dave loved being on the plane and can't wait to really fly, although his back was not very happy after just 20 minutes in the seat. He also enjoyed riding on the train to get across the airport. We were told that this airport is the largest one in the world and it's a mile across. The trains move really fast, the doors shut really fast and they don't automatically open back up if you're not quite in! If you're in a wheelchair you need to be very aggressive in getting right up to the doors and getting right in because most people will just cut you off!

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### **Tuesday, December 13, 2011 7:49 PM, EST**

A very good day! Dave had his first dip in the pool this afternoon and loved it. It will be on his schedule again next week. Tomorrow we go to the airport in Atlanta to see just what it will be like to navigate air travel with a wheelchair. Delta Airlines in Atlanta has THE training program for the entire country for airline employees to learn how to help all sorts of people with accessibility and air travel. We will walk through the entire process and board a Delta plane.

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## **Tuesday, December 13, 2011 5:52 AM, EST**

We finally got to the church service that they have in the 7th floor auditorium every Sunday at 1:30pm. There were about 15 - 20 people in the ever-changing congregation. We sat next to Jeannie whom we had met through Scott. She's another person who's had an unbelievable difficult time of it. She was a pedestrian who was hit by a car that was going 45 mph. Her head actually went through the windshield and then she was thrown off the hood when the driver hit the brakes and she bounced and rolled down the road! Amazingly, she didn't have a scratch on her face but did have many broken bones besides her broken neck. This happened a year ago in October. She ended up in a nursing home where they didn't turn her so she had terrible bedsores. She was finally able to get into Shepherd so she is only just now starting to do rehab.

Yesterday, I was shown how to set up the e-stim on Dave's arms and we'll go over it again today. David also spent nearly two hours on the FES bike in his 'old' gym on the 4th floor. All the guys were there - Ben, Cole, Dave and Jay.

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## **Friday, December 9, 2011 7:48 PM, EST**

Dave is zonked out - had to wake him up to get him into bed! I'm not surprised he's so tired since he woke up at 6, left the apartment by 9 and didn't get back til 5:30.

The holiday party was very nice. It was for everyone in the day program and was held in the auditorium on the 7th floor. There was a Christmas tree on the stage where everyone put their Secret Santa presents and there were probably 16 large, round tables all with holiday centerpieces. A few different companies provided all the food, which was excellent. We had roast turkey, honey ham, stuffing, mac and cheese, roast veggies, spinach and strawberry salad, rolls, fresh fruit and a sumptuous dessert table! After lunch we did the presents and David got an adorable sock monkey that plays Jingle Bells when the hand is pressed. The party was followed by an hour of physical therapy and after that he ended up using the FES bike from 3:30 to 4:40 along with Ben. Dave did almost 10 miles. On our way back to the apartment, Ben's mom noticed that Jay's family were checking out an accessible van so we went over and took a look, too. It was a 1999 Ford with 35,000 miles and the asking price was \$23,000. The roof was raised and the floor dropped so I could stand up in it. They need a lot of height because Jay is 6'4". It looked good but when they used the lift to get Jay out they had a little problem. He made it to the ground but the side of the lift wouldn't fold down so he was stuck there for a while. They finally got it unstuck which was good because it was kind of cold outside!

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## **Thursday, December 8, 2011 4:19 PM, EST**

Well, the nurse visit didn't happen last night because she had to go to the eye doctor - she got something stuck in her eye yesterday. Today Dave had some e-stim or electrical

stimulation on his left arm. His therapist brought out a small kit which will be ours to keep, (supposedly our insurance will cover this!). Again, electrodes are placed on his arm to stimulate the muscles and tomorrow she will show me just how to place them. Tomorrow is also the Christmas party from 12 to 2, lunch included and some Secret Santa fun.

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### **Wednesday, December 7, 2011 2:43 PM, EST**

Another non-stop day for Dave that involved several different pieces of equipment: two separate devices to work his right arm - one of which involved a computer fishing game, time on the tilt-table and an hour on the FES bike. This evening we'll have a 6pm visit with his nurse at our apartment to see how everything is going.

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### **Tuesday, December 6, 2011 9:00 PM, EST**

Hello Caringbridge Followers! I normally write my post on the Facebook site first and simply copy and paste it here, but tonight I thought I'd take a moment to thank you for your guestbook posts which I just spent some looking over. It's hard to believe the first entry was on September 12, almost 3 months ago. The weeks have flown by yet it seems like such a long time ago that this all began. I suppose that's because so much has changed and so many new things have been learned.

David continues to maintain that great attitude and desire to do the hard and sometimes painful work that needs to be done. Thank you all for keeping up with us while we're so far away. We enjoy hearing from you.

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### **Monday, December 5, 2011 3:38 PM, EST**

Dave and I had to eat lunch in the gym today while we waited for Dr. Lin to do the botox injection. While we were there, a woman came over to us and said that she had been reading the journal entries on Dave's Caringbridge site. Her name is Penny and she is here to help take care of her brother, Scott. He 's a different Scott from the one I mentioned in my previous entry. He's 56 and he also has a SCI. He's on the 5th floor, but they saw Dave's pictures on his door when we were still on the 4th floor. The skiing pictures reminded them of their nephew who snowboards. Anyway, she found out Dave's name and looked him up on Caringbridge and has been following his progress. She and her brother say the entries make them feel more hopeful about his recovery. We'll have to make a visit up to meet Scott.

The botox injections - 3 of them - went better than Dave and I expected, painwise. The doctor used some sort of device to measure the amount of spasm in the muscle so he could tell just where to insert the needle. The area with the most spasm would cause the device to "crackle" more. It sounded like a geiger counter. Dave had PT right afterward and he

thought that he already felt looser.

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### **Monday, December 5, 2011 11:11 AM, EST**

It was a quiet weekend - just a little visiting with folks on the 4th floor. We did find out that Scott, (he's about my age and has been at Shepherd many times over the years), and his wife live next to the town of Powder Springs, which is where we may end up after day program finishes up. There is an accessible house there which we may stay in for free while Dave attends outpatient therapy. We'll see...

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### **Saturday, December 3, 2011 7:33 AM, EST**

Yes, the visit to the movie set was super fun! It took about a half hour to get there so there were probably here in Atlanta, Dave wasn't sure. They took over a Costco store since the scene they were shooting takes place in one. Dave said they had removed all the regular store items and replaced them with prop items. There were also lots of trailers parked outside, just as you would imagine. ...Vince Vaughn is huge and Ben Stiller is very small, maybe not even my height and Dave said Ben was wearing skinny jeans and his legs were really thin. They were all very nice and very funny. If you remember Ben Stiller's movie, "Zoolander", then you know the 'modelling face' that he made. Cole said, "Hey, Ben!", and made the 'face' and Ben did it right back. I hope someone got a picture! Pictures were taken but no autographs given. Hopefully I'll get a picture or two to post.

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### **Friday, December 2, 2011 1:28 PM, EST**

It's Fun Friday! Today's field trip should be very special if everything works out. Tyler's dad happens to know Vince Vaughn, THE ACTOR, who is filming somewhere around here with Ben Stiller. Supposedly a visit to the set was arranged. I hadn't heard whether it was a go by the time I brought Dave down to the bus, but I hope I hope so. Otherwise, they'll be going to the movies. I believe Dave, Tyler, Cole and another young woman are going. Poor Ben just had a fourth surgery yesterday, a skin graft, to close up the spot over his spine where he had a MRSA infection, so he can't make this trip.

We did decide on a botox injection to loosen up the 'stuck' muscles. That will hopefully happen on Monday.

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### **Thursday, December 1, 2011 2:54 PM, EST**

This afternoon I was shown how to 'attach' Dave to the FES bike. You stick electrodes on his

thighs and calves (calves?) and secure his feet on the pedals, which are not like the pedals of a regular bike. They're long enough for the entire length of his sneaker to rest on them. We didn't have enough time to do the entire program which takes about an hour and fifteen minutes! This would be an excellent item to have at home but, of course, they are very pricey and not covered by insurance.

Btw, for those of you who don't know, Dave is quite a nagger! He keeps bugging his therapists to work with him more. He met another guy today who, as Dave related it, hurt his spinal cord on two different occasions and even severed his spinal column. This person can operate a manual chair now after seven years of hard work and he told Dave that he has to do more work than he's now getting in day program.

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### **Wednesday, November 30, 2011 8:49 PM, EST**

So busy! Today David got on the tilt-table for the first time. It's basically a bit bigger than a twin bed and he was strapped onto it just below the knees, at the hips and at the chest. You start out horizontal to the floor and then, just like a see-saw, it tilts so eventually you get to an 80 degree angle. This is a challenge for your blood pressure when you have a spinal cord injury. They tilt you up little by little and I'm very pleased to say that David did exceptionally well for his first time. He got to 60 degrees and they only had to go back a little bit one time to let his BP adjust.

We met his doctor today, a man who came to Shepherd when he was 19 with a spinal cord injury. He's in a manual chair himself. The big concern is that right shoulder and the extremely tight muscles. He gave us three treatment options: a botox injection which would take a few weeks or more to really take effect, trying some meds other than baclofen or do a more extensive nerve block.

Tonight, Dave watched wheelchair rugby and met one of the players afterwards. This guy injured himself exactly the same way David did - doing a double front flip on a trampoline - except he was hurt at C5 and 6!

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### **Tuesday, November 29, 2011 7:02 AM, EST**

Dave loves day program. We got off to an early start and made it to registration with 10 minutes to spare and ended up waiting a half hour before our group registration began. Our case manager is warm and funny and we really liked all the therapists we met with, yesterday. We discovered that Dave's blood pressure still tends to be very low in the morning which explains why he never feels that g...ood when he gets up in his chair. We will definitely have to watch that and I purchased a BP cuff so we can check it ourselves.

The gym on the 3rd floor is where all the action is. There were lots of people with all sorts of spinal cord injuries busy working on all sorts of equipment. We saw Mr. Mayer, Jay, Cole

and the woman from Australia, (must find out her name), - all people who were inpatients on the 4th floor with us. There's lots of energy and it's very lively and Dave can't wait to get to work.

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### **Sunday, November 27, 2011 11:39 AM, EST**

It was an amazingly beautiful day, yesterday. Very clear, blue skies, no clouds, a light breeze and 70 degrees. The air actually felt soft to me. We got outside for the afternoon and tried to take a walk up the street but Dave's back was bothering him too much to deal with the rough patches on the sidewalks. We spent a lot of time in the rec room of the building we live in which is on the bott...om floor. It's a huge space with a big TV, fooze ball, an air hockey table that's low enough for a person in a wheelchair to play, (and he did play with his left hand), an organ, tables and chairs and just outside is a lovely garden with a grill and tables which gets lots of sun. We had lunch and dinner there.

Paul left for the airport a little after 10 this morning. That visit went by very quickly and I know it was tough for him to leave. The last thing he did was help get Dave out of bed and do some stretching on him.

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### **Friday, November 25, 2011 7:44 PM, EST**

It took us awhile to get to it, but we finally had our Thanksgiving meal around 7pm after the day's move. Our first night in the apartment went well with Em and Dave in one bedroom and Paul and I in the other. Dave, Emily and I agreed that Em would learn to do some of the night nursing, as getting up at midnight, 4:30 and then 6am is going to be very hard for me to do every night but we'll make ...it work.

Today, we all went to the sixth floor lounge this afternoon to meet Diane and Kelly Goddu who are also from Keene. Diane's daughter, Kelly, had a diving accident 5 years ago in Deerfield, MA. Her injury was deemed a complete C4 which she has totally defied by working very, very hard over the past 5 years. She and her mother are very knowledgeable about the best therapy programs and where to find financial help pay for them and equipment that isn't covered by insurance. Kelly's injury was much more severe than Dave's because the people she was with didn't keep her neck immobilized and the staff at the hospital she was brought to first also didn't know what was wrong. A couple of her aunts were nurses and told her mother to get her out of that hospital. They happened to find Dr. McGillicuddy at UMass so she and Dave had the same neurosurgeon! Unfortunately, Kelly had a delay of 48 hours between her injury and the surgery. Her C5 vertebra had been crushed and the C4 broken and she spent two weeks in a coma. They ended up at Shepherd as well, and have continued to come back here for therapy as well as going to Beyond Therapy in Canton, MA and therapy centers in CT and Fayetteville, GA. Kelly has no sensation like Dave but she has got back the use of both arms, can push a manual chair

and transfer herself from her chair without using a lift. She also has a service dog named Betty that she got a few years ago from an organization here in Georgia.

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### **Thursday, November 24, 2011 11:50 AM, EST**

Happy Thanksgiving everyone! We're still moving out of room 429 and Dave is hanging in bed watching the Macy's parade.

We are so thankful for all the support we had received from family, friends and even strangers since Dave's accident. We absolutely couldn't manage without all of you.

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### **Wednesday, November 23, 2011 1:22 PM, EST**

For those of you who live in the Keene area, check out today's Keene Sentinel, Wed. Nov. 23rd. They have an article about Dave's accident and work toward recovery. His graduation ceremony will be at 2pm and then we'll get to work moving all our stuff next door.

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### **Tuesday, November 22, 2011 8:16 AM, EST**

Here's another interesting story which I forgot to relate: One of his respiratory therapists (and one of our favorites) has been a big guy with a head full of dark, curly hair named Fareez. His family is from the Middle East, Jordan I believe, although he doesn't have any relatives there now. Anyway, a few weeks ago he left to make his hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca that every able-bodied Muslim... that can afford to do so, must do at least once in their lifetime. This also must be done at a specific time each year, from the 8th day to the 12th day of the last month of the Islamic calendar year. This being a lunar calendar, the dates for the hajj rotate, and because it's only one time a year, and given that there are 1.5 billion Muslims in the world, there's quite a crowd in Mecca, Saudi Arabia during this time. Fareez friended Dave on FB so we could see the pictures he took. They look exactly like the ones you can see if you google 'hajj'. A sea of people, all in white in a huge square. The official number for this year's hajj is 2.93 million people and Fareez was one of them! He was gone for 20 days and came back without his curly hair because one of the final rituals for men is to shave their heads; women may cut their hair a couple of centimeters. There is an official hajj homepage, in English, that the Saudi government maintains if you want to read more about it and see some pictures: <http://www.hajjinformation.com/>

Today we will have a Thanksgiving lunch which was prepared by the teams and their patients here on the fourth floor. Dave chopped the celery yesterday as part of his occupational therapy! Right now, his occ. therapist is doing a final evaluation of his upper body. She asks him to try and move this finger or bend the elbow or squeeze his shoulder blades together so she can test the strength of the muscles he's got. See More

[www.hajjinformation.co](http://www.hajjinformation.co)

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### **Monday, November 21, 2011 1:40 PM, EST**

Two more days! Our case manager dropped off a box of supplies that we will need for Dave when we move to the apartment on Wednesday. It's scary to know that we will be completely on our own - no nurse around the corner, no tech to turn him at night or do his midnight and 6am IC's, we have to give him his med's four times a day - I hope we can manage to get enough sleep. And, if there's an emergency, we'll just have to call 911.

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### **Sunday, November 20, 2011 11:26 AM, EST**

Dad arrived last night a little before six. We were off on a little adventure in the tunnel that goes underneath Peachtree Rd. so Paul walked into an empty room. We all ran into each other on the first floor as we were on our way back to the room. Since it was so nice out we decided to get Dave out on the street to get some Subway for dinner - it was his first time going so far up the street!

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### **Saturday, November 19, 2011 11:44 AM, EST**

For the first time since we've been here, the phone in Dave's room rang. It was a neighbor of his Aunt Kristen's who told me that Kristen had given her a ride to Logan because she was coming to Georgia for her sister's birthday. She had heard all about David, and wanted to call us as soon as she got here to let us know that many people are thinking of David. She said her name is Eugenia and she ...comes to Georgia every year to visit her sister who lives about 2 hours from Atlanta. "Genie" and I agreed that Aunt Kristen is a very wonderful person! Thank you, Genie.

So much has been going on that I go blank when I start to post. I made a few notes so I could catch you up. This Thursday there was a Chili Cook-Off fundraiser. About 18 different teams were assembled from Shepherd Center employees and each team cooked some chili. Dave's physical and occupational therapists were on one of the teams, so on the previous Wednesday, everyone had to help prepare the chili. It just so happened that there was the tornado watch which turned into a warning when the food prep was underway. This forced everyone out of the rooms with windows and into the hallways for about an hour and a half. They were able to move the food prep into a conference room so they could keep working. The event itself was great fun. Dave stayed with his team and I went around getting samples for the both of us. These samples turned out to be our lunch for the day! The Atlanta Falcon cheerleaders were there again, so Cole's mom got a few pictures of Cole, Tyler and Dave with them, and she got a shot of just Dave and three of the girls. Btw, Dave's chili team came in second, although I, and many others, thought they had the best,

most classic chili of all.

Two things happened yesterday: First we ran into Jay in the hall and Dave insisted they race. Jay won by a hair the first time and by a little more the second time, but Dave was at a disadvantage because there was a bag of laundry sticking out on his side of the hall! Their race made Cheryl recall the time they had a decathlon between a couple of patients that had been a lot of fun, so she told Dave and Jay to come up with ten challenges that they would go head to head on and that it would be promoted as a fundraiser for the boys! Second: Last weekend one of the respiratory therapists was hanging in the hall and the talk turned to running over things with your wheelchair. She said that she had a huge roll of it at home and would bring it in, well... she showed up last night with exactly that, and a couple of smaller rolls that she had her husband buy just in case she couldn't find the other one. She also brought a military issue glow stick from her husband who is in the marines. It was nine o'clock and Dave was in bed so we made a date for next Wednesday evening to go down to the third floor where she says there is a really long hall and Dave can pop as much bubble wrap as he wants!

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### **Friday, November 18, 2011 3:10 PM, EST**

After yesterday's procedure, I didn't think Dave would make it to the mall outing but he pulled it off. The doctor had to have Dave on his stomach in order to do the injection. The flip to his stomach plus having to turn side head so much to one side really, REALLY hurt his neck. Dr. Musser was surprised at the amount of pain it caused him this far out from the surgery. He put Dave on a once a da...y dose of a time-release muscle relaxant (Amirix, I think) for seven days. It's major side effect is severe drowsiness so Dave will take it before bed. Last night's dose kept him asleep all night but also quite out of it through the morning. At least with the nerve block, his therapist was able to do some deep work on his shouldler blade and got it a little loosened up. He was still in pain but able to tolerate much more of the necessary therapy.

We had a good time at the mall which Dave found relaxing. It was a good space for him to cruise around. Our mission was to find some shirts and we did get one. When we got back his nurse, Artica, had brought lots of balloons for us to blow up and put in Cheryl's (his counselor's) office as a prank. Dave had been leaving a banana on her door handle every night. I think she knows it's Dave!

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### **Thursday, November 17, 2011 11:31 AM, EST**

We're closing in on our discharge day! They removed the telemetry wires that have been stuck to Dave's chest since we arrived here and the box so he's free to go wherever he wants. I'm glad they're out of the way, period. A pain specialist visited this morning and decided to do a nerve block this afternoon. They will watch the site with xray so he can see the channel the needle has to go down.... This should really take care of the shoulder and

shoulder blade pain so the therapist can get in there and work out the adhesions, (where the muscles are stuck to the bone, which can happen when there has been trauma and immobilization). This doctor may also be able to convince the other doctor that performs EMG's, (a test to see where nerve damage may be), to go ahead and give Dave that test. Or, if not the EMG, at least an MRI could help them see what's going on. It's critical that this be taken care of or Dave won't be able to get that right arm back.

There's a knock on the door and it's Pam, our case manager, who says we are confirmed for day program - YEAH!

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### **Wednesday, November 16, 2011 5:41 PM, EST**

The fire station was fantastic - the biggest one around in Roswell. They were able to ride up a hundred feet in the bucket on the giant ladder truck and they sat in the cab and sounded the alarm which David said was UNBELIEBABLY loud. They have tons of equipment, even hovercraft!

Today's big news was that Dr. Zadoff said if Dave passed the lung volume test they could take out the trach. Dave blew a 1700 which was way more than necessary so out the trach came. Dave insisted that Emily video the removal and I know that many of you have already watched it on his FB page. It's graphic and awesomely gross!

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### **Tuesday, November 15, 2011 1:11 PM, EST**

David is off on an outing to a fire station today and won't be back til 3pm. I've been using the time to contact people that may have helpful information regarding our situation. So, for today's post, I'm going list some of the things that we need, just in case some of you out there may know something or someone that can be of assistance in our efforts to prepare for the time when Dave comes... back to NH.

Above all, we need to find another place to live as our current residence isn't going to work. Next is wheelchair accessible transportation - a van that's already modified or one that we can have modified. Beyond those major necessities are some things that medical insurance doesn't cover: a backup manual wheelchair, a Hoyer lift, a shower chair. Please contact me if you can offer any help with any of these things and thank you!

Oh - I have dependent passenger transportation class now - I'll try to make another entry after Dave gets back - Bye

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### **Monday, November 14, 2011 7:59 AM, EST**

Finally, a post! Let's start with Friday evening - just hanging in the hall with Tyler and Cole's family who came over to visit and have pizza. Someone got a box to play a little hall soccer with and Dave had his mp3 hooked up to a little speaker that we tucked into the bag on the back of his chair so we could have some tunes.

Saturday morning he had physical therapy in his room while he watche...d one of the skiing videos that his Aunt Kathy had given him. It was "The Grand Bizarre" for those of you who know your extreme skiing videos. We had it played on the channel for the fourth floor which meant anyone on this floor who happened to check out channel 47 would be able to see it. Someone who did enjoy skiing did catch it and was very impressed. He's in room 415 and I'd say around 50 years old. He and his wife stopped by to meet Dave and to tell us his story. He wiped out while mountain biking on a trail. Lucky for him, a group of bikers came by and one of them was an EMT. He sustained injury from cervical vertebrae C2 through C6 so he drives his wheelchair with a sip and puff straw.

Another fun activity was wheelchair train. Emily and David "borrowed" a stool from the gym that has four wheels on it. She would hang on to the back of the chair and get towed around. I joined in by hanging onto Em and we went around the block. It started a trend as we noticed others doing the same thing later on.

Sunday was such a gorgeous day - 70 degrees, sunny. We got outside for awhile in the afternoon, along with everyone else. Someone was having a child's birthday party in the parking lot of the apartments that are right across the street. It must have been a little girl's party because there were pink balloons and the two ponies they had for pony rides were wearing pink headwear as well.

Gotta go, it's 8am already!

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## **Friday, November 11, 2011 8:39 AM, EST**

Yes, the gastric tube is out, but I really had my doubts that it could simply be pulled out after the tie was snipped. Cathy was pulling on it really hard and the tube was s-t-r-e-t-c-h-ing! I thought for sure that something that shouldn't pop out would. It finally gave way and came flying out, leaving behind what looks like a second bellybutton.

Connie came bearing gifts of clothing for all... of us and some homemade chicken noodle soup. That was Dave's before bed snack last night and I had some for dinner and it was delicious, thanks Connie. While she was here, Dave had outdoor sports therapy down in the gym. He was set up with a BB gun which he could aim with his head and left arm. With the side of his face his could push the gun to the right and with his left hand he could move it up and down. He was always great at aiming when he used the BB gun at home and he's still great at it. He killed the rat - one on paper -with some very accurate and consistent shooting! Next week he will try fishing.

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## **Thursday, November 10, 2011 7:50 AM, EST**

Michael's photography auction was a great success and lots of fun! David enjoyed bidding and we did walk away with a sunset/twilight shot of the ocean in Florida. Dave also wanted the sunrise pic as well but he also needs new sneakers! The auction raised \$399 which Michael will use towards a better camera. There were some exciting bidding wars and the final picture of a pigeon went for \$100 to ...Cheryl, the auctioneer and counselor. She spent twice her limit but the photo was well worth it, it was the favorite of many.

Today they will finally be able to remove his gastric tube. It took a phone call to the surgeon who 'installed' it to really be sure how to take it out. In the end, a snip of a plastic tie and a pull of the tube should do it. His physical therapist, Cathy, will do the honors! It's also design your own wheelchair day, we have a 9am appointment for that. And, last but not least, we will have a visit from cousin Fred's wife, Connie.

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## **Wednesday, November 9, 2011 9:36 AM, EST**

Yesterday was a rather bittersweet day - Ben and Kelly both graduated from inpatient rehab. There are only two left, David and Tyler, of the group of about 8 young people who have shared this part of their recovery for up to the past four months. David was actually the newest member. As a special and kind of against-the-rules treat, Cheryl, counselor to all these kids, brought them all up to the... deck on the seventh floor last evening. Emily took several pictures of the city lights and of the group. Most of the group pics were blurry but I'll have her post the best one. If you go to her FB page you can see one of the city lights. Em and I had purchased some glow sticks a few weeks back so she brought those up and made some glasses and necklaces for everyone to try on. They looked great out there in the dark!

Today, Michael, one of those young people and the one with the most dramatic recovery so far, (he's walking!), is having a fun little fundraiser. He's hoping to become a photographer and will be having an auction of 13 of his pictures. Counselor Cheryl will be the auctioneer. I'll have to make sure I don't miss that. He's already heading home by the end of this week. He's also the one with the connection to the service dogs so we probably won't be seeing the Cairn Terriers or the golden retriever again : (

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## **Monday, November 7, 2011 10:44 AM, EST**

Dave had a very rough night, Saturday. He was feeling very anxious and his blood pressure was up. I don't know how to put this delicately, but it was probably due to a slowed down digestive system. He was all better by the morning but was quite tired all day. We did get out to the Secret Garden with Aunt Kathy in the afternoon and, once again, there were dogs - two Cairn Terrier puppies, a bro...ther and sister about 6 months old - much to my sister's

and Dave's delight. Kathy is a true dog-lover and I think I mentioned that Dave really wants to get a dog now. Seeing animals always helps to take his mind off of the pain which was really aggravating him yesterday.

Later on, Dave went to Tyler's room to hang out and watch a movie with a few friends. Went it was time to get him in bed, we decided that the three of us could do it without the help of a tech, especially since Emily is so good with the lift. I'm very pleased to say that we had no problems at all from start to finish!

Aunt Kathy had to say goodbye to Em and Dave last night since she has a 10:30 flight this morning. It was so wonderful to see her - she is absolutely the very best sister ever, right up there with Emily! Thank you for the surprise visit, it made us all very happy.

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### **Sunday, November 6, 2011 10:08 AM, EST**

Yesterday was a great day. Kathy went to physical therapy with Dave in the morning and played watergirl for the group of four guys that were working with the same therapist. During the afternoon I took her to Fresh Market which is a chain of grocery stores similar to Whole Foods. They were having their Thanksgiving food preview so the customers could sample the dinner that is available to order... for the holiday. It was all delicious and I ended up ordering our Thanksgiving dinner with Fresh Market since Paul will be here. I don't know where we'll be eating it yet but at least I know we'll have the food!

Last night turned out to be a lot of fun. Three of the guys that went to the day program came over and everyone ended up in the gym to play a really neat game. I'll have to ask Michael's mom the name because it was a great game to play with a big group of people. One person would pick a card and read it aloud. There would be a sentence instructing everyone to think of something you wouldn't do on a first date or something you wouldn't name a children's book, etc. Everyone but the person who read the card writes their answer on a piece of paper which is then turned in to the reader. That person reads the responses out loud and then each other person has to guess who wrote which response. If you guess correctly, you may continue guessing until you're wrong, then the next player guesses. One point is given for a correct guess. It was pretty hilarious. In the end I think Jay and Kelly tied for first, Dave tied for second with Cole and Ben and Michael were in last place.

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### **Saturday, November 5, 2011 1:19 PM, EDT**

We had a very big and very happy surprise walk in the door last night - my sister, Dave's and Emily's Aunt Kathy, popped into the room around 7. She had been looking at flights to Atlanta every night online so her husband said just book one and go, and happily, she did! This was very brave of her since she has never flown by herself before. She made it to Logan, (and is doubtful that she'll ever find her car again), survived a patdown at the

airport because she left her credit card in her back pocket, got dropped off by the taxi at the hospital next door but managed to find her way to us in the end. We all went to the gym to watch the basketball tournament for a while. It's the annual Shepherd Shootout and it runs through Sunday. Basketball in wheelchairs is insane! We all were very amazed by the athletes. We saw two crashes which resulted in players tipping over but they all know how to right themselves without any help. After the game, Kathy and I walked to Subway since Dave was hungry and she hadn't eaten all day. I drove her back to her hotel and spent the night there and we had a little adventure coming back to Shepherd - some roadwork forced me to go left when I needed to go right and we ended up on a highway. Luckily, I recognized a sign for Piedmont Rd. which I cross on my way to Ronald McD's house so we got on that, went to the McD house so my sister could see how beautiful it is and made it back to Shepherd by 9:30 am.

Kathy went with Dave to his PT from 10 to 11 and now we're going to make a Starbucks run. If it wasn't so cold out - 50 and breezy we'd take Dave out but he's feeling cold right now. We'll get to that tomorrow for sure

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### **Friday, November 4, 2011 9:39 AM, EDT**

David's going to take a couple of needles in his right shoulder shortly! Hopefully this will relieve his pain enough for his therapists to work that side the way it needs to be worked. He had another fine night without the ventilator so we'll be taking it out of the room by the end of the day. Btw, lydocaine and kenalog are what's being injected and Emily is filming the action. Well, as you will see in the video, it was pretty much a non-event. The suspense was the worst part!

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### **Thursday, November 3, 2011 10:35 AM, EDT**

Bowling was a success, the only tough part for Dave was the bumpy ride there and back in the van - it really hurt his neck. I was having a bout of vertigo so I didn't make it but Emily got a ride over with one of the other parents.

And the big news is, of course, he's off the vent! No problems overnight in ICU, they just have to leave the ventilator in his room for the next two days just in case...e but, after that, it will be gone for good.

In other medical news, Dr. Zadoff cut the amount of blood pressure med Dave has been getting in half. That should help reduce the higher blood pressure issues he'd been having and the doc also reduced the med that keeps his heart rate up from four times a day to twice a day. As his body gets more adjusted he will also be able to go without wrapping his legs with ace bandages and wearing the band (girdle) around his waist.

Btw, Dave can talk! He's actually had a speaking valve since last Friday, it just didn't dawn

on me to mention it!

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### **Wednesday, November 2, 2011 10:00 AM, EDT**

We're going bowling this afternoon! It's an outing that family members may also attend. AND: tonight Dave gets to spend the night in ICU without the ventilator, which he should breeze through, and be off the vent for good! The eating is still going well, too, so they're going to check on whether the feeding tube needs a small procedure to be removed or if it can just be pulled out. I would expect the nutritionist would like to see the eating continue as it has been through the end of this week just to be sure he's ready.

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### **Tuesday, November 1, 2011 9:53 AM, EDT**

The Haunted Gym was a great success - I screamed a few times and one of the ghouls made Emily jump. It was really quite elaborate, no wonder it took more than a week of planning. David was in the graveyard with Tyler and, after waving his left arm at people for a couple of hours, his neck was pretty tightened up but some numbing gel and pain med took care of it. We brought the camera but were t...oo caught up to take pictures! I had to wash lots of 'blood' off of his arm last night but he was sound asleep while I was doing it. I thought he was out for the night but I noticed thi morning that Emily had written on his food log that he ate a whole other dinner after I had left for the evening! If he keeps the eating up they'll be able to take out his feeding tube which hasn't been used for well over a week.

On the ventilator/trach front we're just waiting for the ICU to have a bed available for him to spend the night off of the vent and he'll be completely weaned!

A few posts ago I sent out some thank you's and I knew that I was missing some: Thanks to Uncle Steve and Aunt Eileen for their note and gift of a Bible and the book, For Your Joy. Also thank you to Trevor Chamberlin for the photos and note. We truly appreciate everyone's efforts to support David.

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### **Sunday, October 30, 2011 7:42 AM, EDT**

It's Atlanta Road Race Day which means Peachtree Rd. and some others that I travel will be partially blocked starting at 7am so I headed in early. Getting a little bet of snow, huh?! All the news programs are talking about NY, NJ, CT and MA for all the power outages and downed trees, etc. Is the snow fluffier up in NH?

David had his first experience with something called dysreflexia yesterday.... It's pretty

scary - his head started to pound and his face got red blotches. This is indicative of one's blood pressure rising to dangerous levels very quickly. It's caused by the body being irritated by something that the person isn't aware of, because with a spinal cord injury, you don't feel when something isn't right with your body. Signals are being sent but they can't get to the brain, so the body's last ditch attempt to get you to notice that's something is wrong is by making the blood pressure rise. He was in his chair at the time and started to feel weird. He wanted his pressure checked and it was quite high, especially for him: 145/80 something. First action is to get him sitting upright, get the ace bandages and special hose off of his legs, take off the binder around his body. Those things are on him to help keep his pressure from getting too low when he's sitting in the chair but you want to loosen them when pressure is too high. The major cause of dysreflexia in spinal cord injuries is having a bladder that's too full. Another one is having an ingrown toenail or something is too tight on the body. Once the source of irritation is eliminated, the blood pressure will go back down quickly, but if it's not corrected very soon, the person can have a stroke! We don't know for sure what was bothering Dave's body but I think I may have put the ace bandages on his legs a little too snugly and maybe the binder around his torso was also too tight.

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### **Saturday, October 29, 2011 2:09 PM, EDT**

Always so busy here, so sorry I didn't get to post yesterday. It was another very good day - off the vent til midnight! My cousin Fred and his wife Connie stopped in for a visit and took me out to lunch. They also brought lots more candy for Halloween and some decorations. Next time they come Emily has to go out with them because I don't think she's left the building all week!

Today it actual...ly feels like fall - I don't think it's quite 60 degrees and there's a stiff breeze. I'll take this over the Northeaster I heard is coming to NH.

Since it's Saturday, Dave and Emily slept in. He had a very, very leisurely (9:30 to 11!) breakfast of 1 hard-boiled egg, 1 McD's hash brown, 1.5 chocolate chip Eggo pancakes and 6 oz. of milk. It really takes his stomach a long time to calm down in the morning. Now we're all hanging out watching Jim Carrey movies but Dave is going to have to get to some history reading before the day is over.

We love you Elm City Bagels! The picture of Dave is as fabulous as I'm sure the DH is. It's too bad you can't ship a few of them to us!

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### **Thursday, October 27, 2011 7:40 PM, EDT**

It's been a fabulous day here in Atlanta! Dave has been breathing on his own since 9:45 this morning!!! That means he's been kind of free to roam the block, (his nurse gave him

permission even though it's against the rules!). So, Dave has been socializing with Ben and Cole and having races in the hall.

This afternoon, his occupational therapist took him down to the cafeteria to work on eating s...ince he hadn't eaten lunch yet. He actually ate half a good-size piece of chicken, all of the carrots, some fruit punch and half a chocolate chip cookie. I just went to Subway so hopefully he'll eat at least half of the foot-long and there's a cupcake from Tyler just waiting for him.

Our discharge date is Nov. 23rd, the day before Thanksgiving. My case manager said that she is 90% sure we'll go right into the day program. That would be the best thing for us since we're not yet set with housing in NH. If worse comes to worst, we would try to find a place here that would accomodate Dave and try to find another place to do therapy while we wait for an opening in the day program.

On to some thank-you's: to Dave's former, (not old!), teachers from Fuller School for their card and gift. Dave says hi and will come for a visit when he's gets back. To Dave's Aunt Lisa for the "spooktacular" care package - some of the things will come in very handy for the Haunted House that all the kids here will be participating in on Halloween. To dad and Candy for the care package that arrived today and to Aunt Kathy for the requested nose-hair trimmer!

Thank you all and good night!

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### **Thursday, October 27, 2011 10:31 AM, EDT**

Big and busy day, yesterday. Despite feeling sick to his stomach and actually losing it when he tried to eat some breakfast during OT, David managed to ditch the collar AND stay off the vent for a whopping hour and five minutes for his first try!!! I'm told that most people manage 10 - 20 minutes at first. He was really helped by a visit from a Rotweiller named Maisy. You can see pictures below.... She was unbelievably sweet. He was petting her with the wrist support on his left hand and it was dripping in black fur! Had to change the straps afterwards.

During the afternoon, Emily and I received our respiratory training. We both worked on changing his trach dressing, suctioning and using the inxaflator. I got to suction him later in the day and did okay. The hardest part is keeping one hand sterile the whole time. Today we'll have PT training with Kathi from 1 - 2.

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### **Monday, October 24, 2011 10:26 AM, EDT**

Hi everybody! Dave and Emily really enjoyed communicating with everyone at Pumpkinfest

and checking out the posted pictures - a job well done to all!

Between having a UTI and staying up a long time on Saturday, Dave really needed a morning to sleep in, so I let both of them rest Sunday morning while I moved all our stuff to a new room! I'd heard we'd be moving but was surprised to find out when ...I arrived at 7:30 that we were going to 429 immediately. I did his IC at 8 (which he slept through) and then spent the next 2 1/2 hours making the move. I also had to be out of my apartment by noon - fortunately I had done most of the cleaning and packing on Saturday. I also sent Emily over at 11:15 to move the car up to the fifth floor and get most of the stuff out of the room. This was good because when I finally went over to do the rest it was 1:30 and my key card didn't work anymore! I guess they're really serious about checkout time. I had to wait for security to let me in but I finally finished around 3.

I had one more surprise when I arrived at Ronald McDonald House - they weren't expecting me! My case manager never faxed the paperwork. Thankfully they let me stay and even heated up a plate of spaghetti and meat sauce for me. It's exactly 6 miles away but it took me 20 minutes to get there and that was with light traffic.

Enough of my saga, Emily posted about Saturday's visit to the Secret Garden and meeting Blush, a 12 week old service-dog-in-training. Sunday turned out quite nicely and we're enjoying being in a bigger room that's on the main drag, so to speak. Our other room was in a corner so no one had to go by it to get to their room except for our neighbor, Ben. Now, everyone can see Dave's pictures on the door! Last night Tyler visited for quite a while. He's from Colorado and was out on August 28th with his dad and some friends doing some four-wheeling in the mountains. Tyler driving a large Jeep and he noticed his dad coming to a stop ahead of him. Tyler hit the brakes and the Jeep ended up flipping over. His two friends that weren't wearing seatbelts were fine but Tyler, who was wearing a seatbelt ended up with a spinal cord injury of cervical vertebrae 2,3 and 6 so they had to fuse 2,3,4,5 and 6 together. Tyler is paralyzed from the neck down but he's off the vent and has a button in his trach opening so he can speak. Tyler loves to talk and knows all about his med's and med's for pain since he has a lot of it. While he was in the room, a couple of his family members also stopped in too. We finally had to say goodnight a little before 8 so we could get Dave in bed. Oh, Dave also had a successful (relatively pain-free shower) yesterday afternoon and I got him some chicken nuggets and a small vanilla shake too. He had those on top of eating a good portion of his dinner!

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## **Friday, October 21, 2011 7:47 PM, EDT**

Judging by all the posts, it looks like many people have been very busy gearing up for the big day. One last heartfelt thank you to everyone for making such a huge effort on Dave's and our behalf. I'll be praying for good weather and a smooth-running day for all of you.

David has had a good week overall. He can pick up his left wrist and hold it straight, whereas before it would just "flop". This means he can now stick his left index finger up his nose! Today in interactive technology he was shown a computer that runs with voice

commands. Of course he doesn't have his voice back yet, that is unless his trach is out of position and then he can speak a bit. He finally got to have some McDonald's food yesterday afternoon and ate nine chicken nuggets, some fries and an entire small strawberry shake. I think that's the most he's eaten at one time since he arrived here! Like all the guys here, Dave has lost quite a bit of weight and it made me very happy to see all those calories go into him.

Next week his daily schedule is going to increase with an hour and a half of academic classes. The teacher here has been in contact with KHS so Dave's no longer going to be able to escape schoolwork. Unfortunately, he does seem to have another UTI so I hope that doesn't set him back too much.

I picked up a rental car today because my thirty days of free housing is over on Sunday and I will have to drive back and forth from the Ronald McDonald house from now on. Atlanta traffic is SCARY and every street is named "Peach this" and Peach that' so I hope I don't get lost as I almost did today just coming back with the car!

Good luck tomorrow and have fun!

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### **Thursday, October 20, 2011 7:27 AM, EDT**



Good morning everyone! The video that Barbara was referring to can be found here:

[http://www.atlantafalcons.com/falconstv/?video\\_id=1224901829001](http://www.atlantafalcons.com/falconstv/?video_id=1224901829001)

A couple of the football players made a visit to the Shephard Center. Although Dave is not in the video he did get a couple autographs and meet the players. Pretty cool! Barbara explained who the boys in the picture are and how long they have been at the center.

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### **Wednesday, October 19, 2011 5:52 PM, EDT**

Good morning, everyone. Check out the video below that Dave's cousin, Mark, posted. (Thanks, Mark!) The guys from left to right are Ben, (Dave's next-door neighbor), Cole and Tyler. Cole's injury was a month before Dave's and Tyler's was two weeks earlier. Can't remember when Ben's was but he's been here the longest, I think it's been at least 8 weeks now. They're all doing well and so is Dave. He's adjusted to the new vent setting and didn't ask to have it increased overnight.

The "bicycle" used in yesterday's therapy didn't actually require Dave to sit on it. He stayed in his chair and they brought what looked like a stand with pedals on it to his chair,

strapped his feet on the pedals and started it. It looked like he was doing one full rotation every 1.5 seconds. He was tired afterwards but ended up staying up until 7 last night.

I also forgot to say thank you to our neighbors in Keene for feeding Paul again on Monday - it was delicious!

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### **Monday, October 17, 2011 1:45 PM, EDT**

Sorry to have disappeared - I think I need an assistant to keep up with my correspondence! It's still kind of slow going here. Dave's overnight tube feedings were reduced a bit over the weekend and he usually doesn't feel like eating breakfast (very common in all the teens here). Today he's had low blood pressure and he hasn't eaten breakfast or lunch. He might have done better with lunch if i...t had been more appealing! Also, particularly when it's lunchtime, two or three other things will need doing, then before you know it, it's time to go to a therapy at one. Today, the nutritionist happened to show up a little after one and offered to have the kitchen make him a BLT. Maybe he'll get some of that down while he's working with his recreational therapist until two, then it's off to the gym for physical therapy.

We did get outside yesterday afternoon from a little after 4 to 5. We started to get ready around 1:30 but, as usual, we had to wait for this person or that person. I can't wait to be trained to suction his trach. Then we won't have to wait for his nurse to go for a stroll. However, at the rate things move around here, they won't get me trained until he's off the vent and then it won't be necessary anymore! Such is life in a hospital.

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### **Saturday, October 15, 2011 10:22 AM, EDT**

Good Morning all CaringBridge followers! I just wanted to add to my first post and let you all know how much we enjoy reading your guestbook entries - thank you all!

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### **Saturday, October 15, 2011 10:19 AM, EDT**

Phew! It's amazing how time flys when you're playing nurse! I started at 7:50 and just finished at 10 and I didn't even do breakfast - Em tried to take care of that but he wasn't interested. He's probably feeling worn out from yesterday and I don't know how the night went. I think there may have been a number of suctionings over night based on how the evening went.

I still haven't got the zo...o report yet. I overheard him telling Emily about the gorillas - there was a mom with a baby that she just picked up and slung over her back, he also mentioned elephants and a bird pooped on his nice striped shirt! I'd noticed a dark green

spot high up on his right sleeve when he came into the room and I thought that's what it was. He was very concerned about getting it out and I'm happy to say that the stain is gone.

Dave won't have PT until 12:30 so I'll just do some stretches with him this morning and I'm sure once the afternoon comes he'll feel like getting outside cause it's gorgeous again.

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### **Friday, October 14, 2011 8:21 PM, EDT**

I have a lot to report this evening! First of all, Dave survived his trip to the Atlanta Zoo. I must admit that I was pretty concerned and did my best not to think about it this afternoon. It wasn't until the group was way past their scheduled return time of 4 pm or possibly 4:30 at the latest that I started getting very nervous. He rolled in the room about 5 looking very tired and asking for ...pain med but he was alright. It took a good hour to get him settled in bed and I didn't get to do his 4pm IC until 6 and that was interrupted because he needed his trach to be suctioned. While we were getting him settled in bed he did perk up and kid around with his nurse! He also had a visit by a doctor to tell us that they're going to do a test next week to see why he has so much pain in that right neck/shoulder area. It involves sticking him with needles which made his eyes pop and he asked how many and if he could be knocked out for it! He was just telling Em all about the zoo and the gorillas. I'll have to report on that later.

Em and I took advantage of our free time to walk about a mile to a shopping center. We stopped at a very nice Panera Bread for some lunch. They have a lovely outdoor patio under the trees so we ate there. Our main mission was to go to Office Depot and get a stylus for Dave to use on the computer. He has a strap to wrap around his left hand which has a place to attach the stylus so he can move the cursor, etc. There was also a fund-raising sale in the hospital lobby today - everything cost \$5 so we both bought a couple of things.

I must say it was great not to think about all the 'new-normal' stuff for a few hours!

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### **Friday, October 14, 2011 9:47 AM, EDT**

After four days of clouds and on-and-off rain the sun is shining! What a great day to visit the zoo. Dave just ate all of his breakfast plus some raspberry white chocolate brownie leftover from last night. His 'lung man', Dr. Zadoff, had reduced his assisted breaths from 10 to 8 and Dave is doing well with that so the doctor is making another small change today. Dave is on his way to being vent-free!

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### **Thursday, October 13, 2011 5:04 PM, EDT**

Dave looked really good when he got back from PT at 3, although he lost at checkers against his physical therapist and Team Dave didn't win the wheelchair race (there were two other competitors). Since all three of us we were super hungry, I took a walk to Subway - a most excellent treat as far as I'm concerned - and we enjoyed an early supper. It's good to see Dave enjoying some food so I think the stomach upset is behind him now. He's also been in his chair since nine this morning so he's definitely breaking his previous record of about six and a half hours.

Tomorrow he will go on his first trip off of hospital grounds! Every Friday, everyone on the floor who is able goes out somewhere and tomorrow is a trip to the zoo. They'll leave around one and get back by four-thirty and these Friday excursions are only for the patients, too bad for Emily and I. During the week there are evening outings for the patients and their families to enjoy such as going to the movies, a restaurant or shopping.

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### **Thursday, October 13, 2011 9:24 AM, EDT**

Dave did finally have a better evening but it took one more round of vomitting and some IV anti-nausea medicine to get there. He ended up having a bag of sour cream and onion chips, a little bit of Coke and 2 chicken nuggets around 9 pm - yum yum?!

The overnight went well and, as I discussed with his nurse yesterday, Dave was awake and starting the day with his bath and dressing by 7am. I think getting those things done right away will wake him up enough to be ready to eat breakfast and finished with it before therapy starts, which for today is 9am.

One last thing: Dave received two of the wristbands that were designed especially for him as a fundraiser. He's got them on the control bar of his wheelchair! Here's to the best Pumpkin Fest ever. If you're going to attend, please take a couple of pictures to post!

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### **Wednesday, October 12, 2011 4:36 PM, EDT**

It has been a day - a really, really off-to-a-bad-start-never-really-improved kind of day. However, Dave is finally resting comfortably now! I am so thankful that I had a good sleep last night because I think I'd be a damp, crumpled lump on the floor by now. I won't go into great detail but the day involved a painful - albeit brief - mishap in the lift, no time for breakfast other than some Ensure during morning therapy which came back up when Dave was supposed to be having lunch. The cleanup and recovery from that and a couple of other things took the whole lunch hour. Then, when his occupational therapist insisted that he try to eat his lunch, none of which appealed to him in the least, he threw up again! I must say, to his great credit, Dave did manage to laugh at his nurse at one point because he bumped his head on Dave's wheelchair!

Enough of that, we'll look forward to a better evening. I have a meal ticket for Dave so I'll be able to pick something more to his liking for dinner tonight and we'll attempt to Skype

with big brother Jason and family as well. Here' to a much better day tomorrow!

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## **Tuesday, October 11, 2011 3:23 PM, EDT**

Off to another slow start, most likely due to the switch in meds. Dave could not be roused from sleep so he didn't get to his 9am physical therapy until almost 10:30. When he got back to his room, he had some air leaking around his trach cuff so he could make a really funny-sounding laugh. He and Emily were both nearly rolling on the floor over that! We did have a quick change of emotions after that, though. I ran down to the cafeteria to grab some food and when I got back to the room several minutes later, both of them were in tears. Em had been reading a message to Dave from one of his friends and it really brought up some very poignant and bittersweet emotions and, I'm sure, an acute sense of loss of those things that were but aren't right now. I read the message and was sent over the edge as well.

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## **Monday, October 10, 2011 4:50 PM, EDT**

**Monday, October 10th**

Hello CaringBridge Followers! It's almost 5pm on Monday afternoon and Dave is back in bed after being in his chair since 9:30 this morning. He had recreational therapy, physical therapy and occupational therapy today, all between 9:30 and 2:30. They've dropped the number of breaths he gets from the respirator from 12 to 10 and I think he was feeling the difference. He was very tired after the last therapy and we kept having warning sounds from the respirator. It took them awhile to get things straight but once they did, he perked up, finished his bag of Funyuns and managed to stay up until 4:30. Dinner (chicken tenders, corn, cream of mushroom soup, potato chips, fresh fruit bowl, 2-8 oz. bottles of whole milk and German Chocolate cake) was recently delivered but he's sound asleep! We don't usually get around to eating it until 7pm, and, no - he won't eat ALL of it!

Tomorrow I have a 'goal-setting' meeting to find out what they have projected for the rest of his stay as an impatient.

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## **Sunday, October 9, 2011 8:54 PM, EDT**

David's weekend proved to be a bit better than the previous week. The following are three posts that Barbara posted Saturday and Sunday.

***Saturday, October 8, 2011*** *It's our 4th Saturday since Dave's injury and I want to start out with something, or rather someone who's been mostly unsung and completely steadfast throughout this whole, crazy, scary process: Dave's sister, Emily. We simply couldn't be doing this without her, especially now that Paul is going back home tomorrow. I*

*said it before on her FB page and I'll say it again: You are wonderful and beautiful, inside and out! I thank you and I love you very much.*

*Another huge thank you to my daughter-in-law, Brittney. What a powerhouse of planning - Dave is going to have the best booth at Pumpkin Fest! And thanks to all who are helping to pull that event off. Dave has the best friends anyone could ask for.*

*Now on to the man himself. He's still very much in this rough patch, so much so that I found myself having to sit down and have a cry in the hallway. One of the nurses, Gloria, came and sat with me and told me that he will get through this. When people with spinal cord injuries that are this new get infections, the going gets very rough for a while, but she assured me that she's seen it before many times. She also said that since the staff does get used seeing these things, and they are so routine for them, that they may forget how hard and scary it is for the relatives of the patients to see their loved one - to be frank - declining and getting sicker. As 'newbies', we came to Shepherd knowing that the recovery was going to be long and an incredible amount of hard work, and even that there would be 'setbacks', but I personally had envisioned the setbacks to be of the emotional variety, not medical. It's all part of the learning curve.*

*One last thank you those who read these updates, I also find writing them to be a good outlet for my up's and down's and I appreciate reading your thoughts and comments.*

### **Saturday October 8th, PM**

*It's 4:25 Saturday afternoon and I'm pleased to report that David's day improved quite a bit over yesterday. We, meaning Dave, Paul, his nurse Gloria, his tech Wydricka and I all went out to the Secret Garden to spend some lovely time in the sun. Dave had a little trouble handling the elevator ride down so we had to pause for a blood pressure check but it was worth the trip. Lot's of folks we're out enjoying the perfect weather. It must have been 80 in the sun, but dry and with a few stiff breezes. Gloria let Wydricka break the rules and walk down the street to Chick-Fil-A to get a couple of shakes. They asked Dave if he wanted one but he said maybe later, so perhaps I'll be taking a walk a little later! The Cookies 'N Cream shake comes highly recommended by Wydricka.*

**Sunday, October 9, 2011** *It's a quiet Sunday here in Atlanta. Paul should be arriving in Manchester around 4pm. Dave and Emily are watching Transformers and dozing. I've done a little grocery shopping so I was able to make Dave a fresh omelet for lunch: 2 eggs, spinach, ham and cheese and he ate all but two bites. As usual, it was a slow-starting morning but I hope to get him out of bed after the movie. Tomorrow will bring a much fuller daily schedule and on Tuesday I have a meeting with his doctors to map out a plan for him.*

*I spoke to Paul tonight and he said that David loves getting letters and he also loves hearing about how everyone is doing. Maybe send him some news about yourself and what's new. Someone reads the letters to him and they are much like a story...so make it creative...make it a history lesson...anything you want! Thank you again for all your support. The Hudgiks are going to need us all for a long time! Write to them and let them*

know your thinking of them!

~Candy

PS. Linda you can share your story with David. It's fine with me and I'm curious....could it be the Plymouth Plantation trip?

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### **Saturday, October 8, 2011 2:35 PM, EDT**

I have to start with an apology. I haven't updated CB in awhile. I read Barbara's posts and have a hard time thinking how to rewrite my friends words and feelings. It has been a difficult week for Dave and his Mom this week. Although I don't get to talk to Emily and Paul, I'm sure that it's difficult for them at times as well.

I spoke to Barbara and told how wonderful it is to hear from her on FB. You can read the honesty of their ordeal and not only what David is going through, but just a hint of what the family is going through as well. I have invited Barbara to post on CB as well. She can even cut and paste the posts from FB. I'm sure all of you would appreciate hearing from Barbara, especially if you are not following David's Journey to Recovery on FB. Possilby the next journal entry will be my friend Barb's.

David has had a rough week with the onset of a bladder infection. Unfortunately, as quickly as you might think someone can get over a bladder infection for David it's just not that easy. The bladder infection has made David feel a bit weak and not very hungry. His energy level is down. Dave still struggles with mucus issues as well and I can tell you first hand from the one night I spent with Dave, this is not an easy thing to watch. No parent should ever have to see their child fighting for air. The staff at the Shephard Center assures Barb and Paul that this is "normal" for a spinal cord injured patient, but as a parent, how can one ever think of any of it as "normal".

Barbara, Paul and Emily are doing an amazing job. Everyday they learn a little bit more about how to care for Dave and they go for the challenge with grace and dignity. They have so much information coming at them to process and learn. One day at a time.....

My love to the Hudgik family..there isn't a second of the day that I'm not thinking about you.

~Candy

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### **Sunday, October 2, 2011 4:57 PM, EDT**



I'm back! I don't know how many of you only read this CaringBridge site and don't have access to David's Road to Recovery. For those of you who rely on CB here is an update for the past week....for some this may be a repeat of information.

Since Dave has been in Atlanta he had his hair buzzed, has spent hours in an electric wheel chair and is able to change the flat screen television by using his mouth and blowing into a tube. He has a private room that faces east just as the room in Worcester so he still gets to see the sun rise! He has had some feeling go away, such as in his toes, but they reassured Dave that this is not uncommon and doesn't mean its gone for good. He has had "spasms" in his right leg which made his leg move about 3". He felt the spasm which is very cool!

Emily still spends every night with Dave. Barbara and Paul are there during the day. The weekends at the Sheppard are a bit low key and have been a little hard on all the Hudgiks. Barbara has been in contact with her cousin Fred, whom she had never met before. They live fairly close the Sheppard which means someone to visit and go off campus with on occasion! Fred's wife Connie found Dave some very cool size 13 sneakers!!

I was able to talk to Barbara yesterday for about an hour and she sounded great! Much more rested than the last time I spoke to her! Emily, Paul and Barbara are staying in family housing right near the center. Barbara says it's much like a hotel/apartment building with a small kitchen/living room area and a bedroom with two twin beds. They have been able to cook meals there and they are always close by to Dave. They can live there for 30 days at no charge, but after the 30 days they will have to find other housing. Of course there is no time line for Dave quite yet....one day at a time!

Dave still has his trach, but is eating real food now! Chicken fingers, pizza and pancakes, just to name a few! Although I know he came up with a sandwich called the DH over to Elm City Bagels, I have yet to find out what's on it! I just may have to go get one for lunch tomorrow!!!

Barbara and I have challenged our computer skills and signed up for Skype! Tonight we hope to give it a go!!! It will be nice to see the family and say Hi to Dave!

Thank you again to EVERYONE who has sent in donations to The David Hudgik Fund! Again I am blown away by your generosity! The "I ski for David" and "I ride for David" bracelets are in and very cool!!!! Please contact me if you would like one! \$5 each and they are really awesome!

I will up date you again as often as I get any news!

To the Hudgik Family: I missed you last week and there wasn't a moment of the day I didn't think of you all!

To Dave: We are here for you and rooting for you! We know you CAN and WILL do this!!! Keep up the great work! Love you!!

~Candy

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### **Wednesday, September 28, 2011 2:50 PM, EDT**

If anyone would like to send David anything, heres the address. Im sure he'd love to hear from you all.

David Hudgik (Room 424)  
The Sheperd Center  
2020 Peach Tree Road NW  
Atlanta, GA  
30309-1465

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### **Sunday, September 25, 2011 9:30 PM, EDT**

Hi again, so i just got word that today was a bit rough for David. His trach became blocked due to mucus build up and mad breathing very hard. Because of this his heart rate started to slow so he has been put on medication to keep it up. Recovery will have good and bad days like Brittany said but its all part of the process. Your doing great David! keep it up, love you bro

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### **Sunday, September 25, 2011 9:11 PM, EDT**

Hi everyone, i haven't received any news today, as soon as i do ill be sure to post. Still praying everyday for you dave!

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### **Saturday, September 24, 2011 7:01 PM, EDT**

Hi everyone, this is Sam. Mummas away:( im feeling a bit under the weather and need to get some sleep so im going to post what Britney posted today on facebook.

Update from Atlanta for Saturday Sept. 24th- Today will be the first full official day in Atlanta for David and the Hudgik Family!:-) I just talked to David's mom and she has nothing but GREAT things to say about the Sheppard Center:-) She wanted me to let you all know that Dave is VERY happy in Atlanta and constantly smiling. He mouthed to his mom "The doctors are SO much better here and know how to move me around better without causing pain!" I already have a amazing vibe about this place! Already his neck pain is down and his breathing seems to only be improving since he arrived to the center. David is SO much MORE comfortable here than in Worcester. Barbara also wanted me to tell you all

that Dave FINALLY slept (completely comfortable) for the FIRST time in over 2 weeks!! Yayy!!!:-) He is going to be completely busy from here on out (9 am to 4 pm) daily working with doctors, getting assessed and starting physical therapy. Today is going to be a full day of assessment to see where Dave is at and starting up a daily regiment for him while he is down there. Also, Dave has been telling his mom that he has MORE feeling in his legs and toes!! THIS IS SO AWESOME!! I had tears coming to my eyes when Barbara told me this! And he can even (SO SORRY DAVE!!) feel bowl movements now! This is such a HUGE step and major progression for Dave! I know he is going to make a full recovery thanks to the Sheppard Center in Atlanta! So grateful he has this opportunity to be there! I think we will be seeing Dave and the Hudgik's before no time at all:-D Keep the prayers coming...they are clearly being answered!! We love you Dave!!♥ Hang in there!! You are making huge strides in success already!!♥♥

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### Thursday, September 22, 2011 10:32 PM, EDT



Tonight I am writing my last journal entry until October 1st. Not to worry I am handing my keyboard over to my son Sam, Dave's friend since kindergarten. My husband, Eric and I are leaving tomorrow for a trip that has been planned since March. The amazing progress that Dave has already made is making it a little easier to leave, but it will still be really hard to be away.

For those of you who don't follow David's Journey to Recovery here is info that was posted today by Brittney Dave's sister-in-law:

Update for Thursday Sept. 22nd- I was just told that David is now sleeping after a rough couple of days/nights not getting too much of it. I know he enjoyed every single one of his visitors the past two weeks or so, and his not sleeping is not due to you guys:-) The percussion bed never helps things, along with any neck and shoulder pain he may be feeling. David's mom said he had an MRI at midnight to see how the healing process is going in his neck and spine- I am, and I'm sure you ALL are too, anxious to see how that turned out! Let's hope nothing but the best for him and everything is healing the right way!:-) Last minute plans for GA are in swing and I cannot wait for them to FINALLY get down there! Dave needs all the best medical attention he can get! This place is the BEST of the BEST, so I am sure David will be making big strides in recovery and back to his old self in no time!:-) Love you David! We are all here for you and cannot wait to hear the progress you and are making once you arrive to GA! There is not a day that you don't enter all our hearts and minds!!♥ STAY STRONG!!!♥♥

Another update- I was reached out to earlier today by Candy Ebbighausen and informed that Elm City Bagel in Keene is having their "Re-Grand Opening" next Friday (Sept. 30th) from 11 am-2 pm. During the winter time this past year, the whole plaza, Diversified Computers, Connecticut River Bank and Elm City Bagels had some re-modeling/construction done to it, but now it is finally complete! So as a result, the plaza is having a re-grand opening to celebrate! I was asked if I, and whoever else would want to help, would be interested in having a table set up at the event for the "David Hudgik Fund" to receive donations and OF COURSE I SAID YES!:-) The bank is located right next door to Elm City

Bagel, so it would be easy to deposit the money in afterwards. Unfortunately, I know it is during a week day/work day and during school for most, but I encourage those who can attend please do! There will be prizes and a tent set up outside of Elm City Bagel with free drinks and food! Stop by the tent (if weather is yucky, we will be inside of Elm City Bagel) and see us and make a donation (small or large- ANYTHING IS APPRECIATED). Again, there is going to prizes and free food and drinks- who wouldn't love to come?!?!? See you all there!:-)

P.S. I was informed that Elm City Bagel is also planning on dedicating/naming a sandwich after David!! Ahhh!! How cool?!?! He gets to pick what he wants it to be called (the Hudginator, DH Sandwich, etc.) and what goes on it- meats, toppings, condiments, etc! And every time someone buys HIS sandwich, a small portion will be made to his fund!:-) The city of Keene has been SO AMAZING to the Hudgik Family! Thank you all!!!♥♥

Thank you Brittney for you amazing updates! I wish there had been just a little more time today that I could have written a better journal entry!

To the Hudgik Family: Good luck on your adventure tomorrow. you will be on my mind all day!!! My love to all of you!

To Sam: Thank you for offering to do CaringBridge for Dave! I love you!

To all of you: Thank you for your continued support! It brings much comfort to the Hudgik Family to know how much you care! I wanted to remind you of Dave's Aunt Kristin's site: [www.davidhudgikfund.org](http://www.davidhudgikfund.org) Its a great site with lots of information and it's another great way to donate to The David Hudgik Fund!

~Candy

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### **Wednesday, September 21, 2011 10:17 AM, EDT**



I just got word from Barbara that the Children's Medical Center (Worcester) has a yearly gala to raise money and they have matched the \$5000 from the Sheppard Center to fly Dave to Georgia! Everyday there is more good news.....Thanks to Mark for posting the sunrise picture from Dave's room this morning!

Love you Hudgik Family!

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### **Wednesday, September 21, 2011 5:59 AM, EDT**

Last night we visited Dave...along with a couple of his friends. We had a birthday party for Savannah with decorations and birthday cake! Very nice! Today is Dave's sister Emily's

birthday so be sure to give her a shout out! HAPPY BIRTHDAY EMILY!

David was his usual self, but definately tired from the day's procedure. It was wonderful to see him, but I wish we would have been able to leave a little sooner so that he could get some rest. It was hard to pull ourselves away. The word is that he is sleeping better in the night and he has certain feelings, such as hunger and knowing when he needs to go to the bathroom (sorry to share that Dave, seems like TMI, but it is so huge for your road to recovery! forgive me! :)

Over the next couple of days the Hudgiks will learn more about the Sheppard Center and exactly how they will be getting Dave down there. They have found a plane and medical people to ride along with Dave at the tune of \$11,000. Out of pocket. The Sheppard Center is giving them \$5000 towards the flight and with all the wonderful donations so far The David Hudgik Fund is all ready up to \$2600! Thank you so much to everyone who has sent in donations and a big thank you to those of you who are planning on sending! I haven't been to the bank in a while to get the names of those who have donated this week.

On a personal note, and related to Dave's Mom. Last night I had to say, "see you later" to "My friend Barbara". For those of you who don't know, I get picked on because that's how I start off if I'm going to talk about Barb. "My friend Barbara will be camping this week, I will watch the house and Thelma". "I went for a walk with my friend Barbara last night and we laughed hysterically when ....." (I can't reveal all the things that we laugh about, TMI) "My friend Barbara and I went for a walk yesterday on the bike path, and stopped by Margarita's for a Margarita along our walk". There are many more.

I will miss you Barbara, BUT I know this is only temporary. I admire your strength and ability to stick to the task at hand and give it your all. Paul, Emily, Jason and you are so amazing and have such a special family. I will remind you, near or far, here or there I am with you all the way!

David, YOU ARE AMAZING!!!!!! We love you!

xoxo~Candy

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**Tuesday, September 20, 2011 11:33 AM, EDT**

**Happy News!**

I received a text from Barbara this morning that Dave was going to be undergoing a bronchoscopy this morning and this is what Dave's sister-in-law Brittney just posted on Facebook!

Update for Tuesday Sept. 20th- David's scope procedure went extremely well and was VERY successful! It took a little longer than expected because the doctor's had SO MUCH mucus and junk to suck out of his left lung. The best part was, almost as soon as the procedure was done, David turned to his family and said "I can breathe!!" This is AMAZING news!!!:) I am literally jumping up and down as I am writing this for you all! This is such a HUGE step for him and a positive turn in the right direction! Now that David can breathe much easier, we're hoping he can come off the ventilator soon and he will be breathing on his own and feeling overall 100 times better. What a sigh of relief! I

can't even imagine Dave what that must have been like to fight for air- but now that it's over (fingers crossed) I bet you will be in even BETTER spirits now! Dave, we're all so proud of you buddy! You are doing amazing and can't wait to hear how you are doing later on today! Love you!!!♥

I'm sure I'm not the only one with tears in my eyes right now. All our love to you Dave! xoxo-Candy

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## Monday, September 19, 2011 6:33 AM, EDT

I spoke to Barbara yesterday. Due to the one collapsed lower lobe in his left lung they have given Dave a special bed. It sounded like they called it a percussion bed which makes sense because it is designed to vibrate or percussion against Dave's back helping to break up the "gunk" that settles in that lower lobe. On the night I stayed with Dave the nurse would come in and wack him on the chest repeatedly to do the same thing for him. I offered to fight the nurse if she kept beating him, but he said he was okay with it! Barb said that yesterday when asked how long he wanted the bed to do it stuff he agreed to the maximum time of 45 minutes at a time. His Dad says he goes into a "zone" and lets the bed do its magic.

Dave had lots of family visiting him yesterday and all the reports are the same. Lots of smiles and even jokes. We are heading back down the middle of this week and if anyone has anything they would like us to bring please don't hesitate to contact me: [cebby224@yahoo.com](mailto:cebby224@yahoo.com). I would be more than happy to bring things to him.

Thank you again for your continued support! He is looking at the computer so leave messages! Even history lessons or maybe a funny joke. He will love it! Thank you to the Hudgik neighbors, the Mortons for looking after things, mowing the lawn and keeping an eye on any traffic coming to the house! :) Thank you to Vicky for your kind words and talking to your "in" at C&S. I can't wait to hear what you find out!

Here is to a new week, even more baby steps and a big step as the Hudgiks transition from the hospital to rehab. Dave you are in my thoughts constantly. I admire your attitude and your "magnetic" personality! ;)

OH I finally remembered that I wanted to share the Family Circus cartoon from last week. The little girl is kneeling and looking up at her mom, **"How many "Talk to God" minutes does our Family Plan allow?"**

Not to worry Hudgik Family, I checked and you have an unlimited plan!

~Candy

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## Saturday, September 17, 2011 3:02 PM, EDT

Would it surprise you if I told you that when the nurse and Dave's Mom were washing his hair this morning that he said, "make me pretty". Would it surprise you that Dave has learned a trick? If he tries to hold his breath the ventilator will force him to take a breath. He

likes to hold his breath just to show you? Would it surprise you that Dave likes to bend his left arm up and make you bend it back down as he grins his little grin? Would it surprise you to know that he made us guess what he was saying only to find out it was, "Am I magnetic?" Because of the plates or rod that they put in his spine he wants to know if we could stick a magnet to his back. We knew the third word was 3 syllables starting with M....Magical? Masculine? Majestic? No, magnetic. :) All of this great humor today after a night of sporadic sleep.

The sun rises outside of Dave's window each morning. This morning it was a beautiful red and orange sky and as I looked out it reminded me that we have been blessed with another beautiful day full of hope and more baby steps.

Dave I am so proud of you! We will see you again soon!

xoxo

~Candy

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**Friday, September 16, 2011 10:16 PM, EDT**

**hanging with dave**

I am with Dave and thrilled to be here. We just finished Lord Of the Rings and Dave is trying to get some rest. There is the white noise of the respirator and the flow of air from the suction. On occasion there is this double beep. The nursing staff is visible from my chair. They are so nice. Monique is his nurse tonight and she is very sweet. There is the sound of a door shutting every now and then, but for the most part it's quiet and peaceful. Outside Dave's huge window you can see the occasional helicopter land on the roof top helicopter pad. Dave is on the 5th floor. I expected to see lights flashing like an ambulance, but they can come and go unnoticed. There are plastic stars stuck to the ceiling above Dave's bed and a poster of hot air balloons. He has some mylar balloons from his brother Jason. I'm not sure I understand the princess balloon, but I love it! On occasion Dave will make a noise with his mouth signaling that he needs to be suctioned. The suction looks like the one they use at the dentist's.

I was able to read some cards to him as well as the well wishes on Caringbridge. He loved his history lesson, hearing from his friends, teachers, family and friends of the family. His Dad explained who some of the people were, but he knew most of them! His smile was great! In the very short time I have been here, I am learning to read his lips, but sometimes I can even hear a faint whisper.

Thank you again for all of your support! To the Stack Family and the Schwerins and Whytes for your generous donations to the David Hudgik Fund today. (forgive me if I spell your names incorrectly, I'm going by memory tonight!)

Goodnight.

~Candy

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**Friday, September 16, 2011 10:12 AM, EDT**

Unfortunately I am one of those people, and I'm sure many of you are too, that puts time lines to things. "one week ago today..."

If we could turn back time...well Cher would have worded her song differently, and obviously we would have all invited Dave to a movie or maybe a book club last Friday, BUT life doesn't work that way. This is what was to happen and in one week we have seen a family and community join together. Connections have been made, new friendships have formed and old ones have become even stronger. And David, in one week has been through so incredibly much and still maintains his beautiful smile, sense of humor and determination.

Today, I had the wonderful chance to speak to Dr. Jan McGonagle. I have known Jan since she was my boys pediatrician years ago. Although she is no longer practicing at the Clinic, I can easily have a conversation with her whether it's in Price Chopper, the produce section at Hannafords or on the phone to talk about Dave. Dr. McGonagle, or Jan as Barb and I call her, sings in a choral group with Barb and has been a wonderful medical "go to" person for Barb and her family.

We spoke for quite awhile and I wanted to share with all of you! Jan informed me that David has been ok'd to go to the Sheppard Center in Atlanta, Ga. This is the most wonderful news! My thoughts over the last couple of days was that he may be in Georgia for years until Jan said something about David in school. I questioned what she meant and she said with the way Dave is progressing he could very well be back at school within months...not years. I held back the tears of joy. She also said that whatever Dave is able to do now will never go away. He will always have use of his left arm and will only start to gain more strength. There will be opportunities for Dave, from flying to skiing, with the help of special equipment. Thank you again Jan!

Today I will ride down with Dave's Dad, Paul. It has been requested that we bring a couple of movies that Dave would like to see! Again I know that many of you want to visit and I will get a feel of that when I go down today and let you know what are his restrictions.

Another reminder if anyone is reading this for the first time. Donations can be made to The David Hudgik Fund, C/O Connecticut River Bank, 255 West Street, Keene, NH 03431

THANK YOU!

~Candy

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**Thursday, September 15, 2011 7:55 PM, EDT**

Another day that I am so blown away by the wonderful people in our community....in the Hudgik community! From Barbara's wonderful family at the Waldorf school to Pauls family at Oce.Thank you to the families that donated to the David Hugik Fund today: the Spears, the Hansels and the Spindlers! Your generosity is so appreciated! To Sam for the great wristband idea, "I Ski For David" and "I Ride For David". They will arrive in the next two weeks and will be a great fundraiser! To Brittney for all her wonderful updates on David's Journey to Recovery, Aunt Kristin, Aunt Kathy, Becky Ogg.....the list is huge and I'm sorry if I am forgetting anyone.

Tomorrow I am blessed with the chance to see Dave. I will actually be staying with him overnight and am so happy that I was asked! It's just you and me Dave! I cant wait to give you a big hug! I have a couple ready for your Mom and Dad too!

~Candy

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**Thursday, September 15, 2011 11:20 AM, EDT**

Just got word that Dave is out of surgery and it went well! He is in his room starting to wake up and his Mom and Dad are with him! :)

~Candy

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**Wednesday, September 14, 2011 8:23 PM, EDT**



It's amazing to me how quickly people are organizing efforts to help Dave. From Jason Howe's homeroom collection jars to Riley Morris' t-shirts. Aunt Kristen's online fundraiser and more! You are all so amazing! And the many, many people leaving him well wishes! Thank you! To the power of prayer!

I spoke to Dave's Mom today. Once Dave recuperates from tomorrow's surgery he will be able to start the next step to his recovery.

Rehabilitation! This means leaving UMass and going to a specialty facility. It will be best for Dave that he get the best care in the best facility as soon as possible. The best care now will mean the best out come! There are a couple of choices for Dave. The best facility in the US is in Atlanta, GA. Of all places they could bring Dave this facility has some of the best long term outcomes in the whole United States! The Hudgiks have so much on their plate. Send them prayers that they can make this tough decision. There are many factors, such as insurance, before they can decide. I know that Dave is going to do this recovery thing in a BIG WAY. Does Dave do anything else? If you're like me your first thought is, "Atlanta?" But

we would be selfish to want Dave close by for ourselves than to have him with some of the best doctors for his type of injury and quick recovery! David, Barbara, Paul, Emily, Jason...near or far, here or there, I am right beside you all the way.

xoxo~Candy

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### **Wednesday, September 14, 2011 1:07 PM, EDT**

The newest update is that they are going ahead with the tracheotomy tomorrow! This is great news for Dave! Good news is great!

~Candy

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### **Wednesday, September 14, 2011 12:17 PM, EDT**

Here is the latest update from David's Journey to Recovery. For those of you following both sorry for the repetition, but it's great info!

"Update for Wednesday Sept. 14th- This morning Dave woke up with a fever and the doctors believe the cause to be due to an bacterial infection:( Not sure how he got the infection but the doctors have started antibiotics and this will hopefully do the job!:) And since he has an infection, they are unable to perform the tracheotomy/surgery until the infection is gone. Poor David...this has been such a rough journey for him but he is AMAZING and such a trooper! This is such a small bump in the road, but I know he will be back to his old self soon! We ALL love you David and you are in our thoughts and prayers every day!!!♥On a better note, his cousin, Stacy (who got to visit him last night), has informed me that David is still his silly/goofy self despite his current situation. This is such wonderful news! SO happy he is able to keep such a positive and upbeat attitude through this whole ordeal! That's the Dave we all know and love!"

Thank you to the Pepin Family and my wonderful co-worker Beth for your generous donations to the David Hudgik Fund today! xoxo!

~Candy

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### **Wednesday, September 14, 2011 5:19 AM, EDT**

Of course one of the first things I do in the morning is go online. I check out the CaringBridge page, FB and now there is a page on FB called David's Journey to Recovery that was started by David's brother Jason and Brittney, David's sister-in-law. Check it out! Brittney posted this on that page that I wanted to share with all of you who can't get to that page:

"Newest update- David's tracheotomy is scheduled for Thursday now. This will allow him to breathe better, be able to talk and be able to eat solid food! Jason also told me that once this procedure is done, David SHOULD be able to start physical therapy as well!!!:) Keep it up Dave!! You are doing awesome!!♥"

I will give you more information today as I get it. Thank you for all your kind words, they are so heartfelt and amazing. I know there are a lot of people who want to go see David. I will try and find out if he can get visitors and what are the restrictions. I'm sure he would love to see all of you!

Here's to Wednesday! May the day be filled with baby steps, smiles, stories, hope and love! I love you Hudgik Family!

~Candy

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**Tuesday, September 13, 2011 8:45 PM, EDT**

**The David Hudgik Fund**

Hi everyone,

I wanted to let you know that an account has been set up at the Connecticut River Bank for David. If you would please make a donation to the family to help them with hotel costs, travel expenses, loss of income, etc., they can use your help. No donation is too small. Maybe even a little something each month would be huge for them. All you have to do is make a check out to: The David Hudgik Fund

Mail the check to: Connecticut River Bank, 255 West Street, Keene, NH 03431

If you would rather make a cash donation you can bring it right to the bank or I would be happy to collect it and make the deposit for you!

Thank you from the bottom of my heart! Your support means so much!

~Candy

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**Tuesday, September 13, 2011 11:25 AM, EDT**

I know everyone has asked me over and over what they can do to help. Donations to the caringbridge make it possible for caringbridge to be available to families like the Hudgiks, but I want to make sure that everyone understands that the donations don't go to Dave and his family. I will keep you informed on how you can make donations directly to the Hudgiks,

but of course supporting this website is wonderful too! Thank you so much to everyone!

~Candy

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### **Tuesday, September 13, 2011 10:35 AM, EDT**

I just heard from Barbara that Dave had a good night! Paul and Dave's sister Emily stayed with him over the night. Everyone takes turns, but he is never alone. Barbara mentioned that Granite Gorge is looking into doing a fund raiser. Friend them on Facebook and watch for any information. I will also keep you informed as I hear any anything.

Positive thoughts, lots of prayers and lots of love!

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### **Monday, September 12, 2011 8:57 PM, EDT**

I just hung up with Dave's Mom Barbara. It was great to hear her voice. Here is what I know. Dave is having a hard time with the ventilator. It is very difficult to have tubes going down your throat, making it impossible to speak and very uncomfortable. They are looking into doing a tracheotomy. This sounds scary, but it is a routine procedure and it isn't necessarily permanent. It will allow Dave to be able to eat, breath and speak without the tubes going through his mouth and into his throat. Of course I googled tracheotomy and this is what I found..."A tracheostomy(or tracheotomy) is a surgical procedure to create an opening through the neck into the trachea (windpipe). A tube is usually placed through this opening to provide an airway and to remove secretions from the lungs. This tube is called a tracheostomy tube or trach tube." Because Dave has feeling on his left side it is very possible that in time he will be able to breath without any help at all. Lots of prayer!

Continue to say prayers, send your love and positive thoughts.

Did anyone see the Family Circus cartoon in today's paper? Unfortunately I can't remember it word for word and the paper is at the Hudgik home. It's what i did while hanging with Thelma today. I will post it tomorrow!

Goodnight David, Goodnight Moon, Goodnight everyone.

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### **Monday, September 12, 2011 8:32 AM, EDT**

David was airlifted to UMass late friday, Sept 9th. After testing he underwent surgery on Saturday morning to repair the damage to his vertabrae and spinal cord. It will be a long recovery from such a major surgery. He is able to feel his left arm as well as bend it. He will be under going respiratory testing in hopes that he will be able to breath with out help soon. I

will keep you updated as I hear from Dave's Mom.

Think positive,

Candy

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