

# Lebanon Co. boy selected C.F. poster boy

When you hear words like "lung-damaging disease" you tend to think of smog-bound cities with narrow, treeless alleys and factories belching smoke. But that's not necessarily the case.

Amid the farmlands of southwestern Lebanon County, not far from historic Umberger's Mill, lives seven-year-old David Umberger. David was born with cystic fibrosis, an incurable hereditary disease which affects the lungs and the digestive system.

David, the younger of two sons of Donald and Florence Umberger of R4, Lebanon,

has been selected as the 1975 poster child for the Central Pennsylvania Chapter, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation with headquarters in Harrisburg.

As the poster child, David recently participated in a proclamation signing ceremony in the governor's office at the capitol in Harrisburg. Governor Shapp went down on his knees to greet David, and the two chattered face to face, apparently oblivious to the confusion and milling people all around them. The governor took the occasion to call upon all citizens of the

Commonwealth to give recognition and support to the worthwhile efforts of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundations.

Cystic fibrosis is the number one genetic killer of children in the U.S. today. Children are born with the disease when both parents carry the C-F gene. It has been estimated that nearly a quarter million persons in the U.S. carry the gene, but as yet there is no sure way of testing for the defect.

The Umbergers learned that their son had cystic fibrosis when he was just 27 months of age. A series of respiratory infections led them to a specialist who made the diagnosis. He sent the family to the Cystic Fibrosis Clinic at Harrisburg Polyclinic Hospital, one of only three such facilities in Pennsylvania. The other two are at Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

For about a year, the Umbergers took David up to Harrisburg to the clinic every week. Then it was every month, then every other month. Today, David visits the clinic once every three months. Thanks to modern medication and therapy techniques - the result of Foundation research - David's disease is presently under control.

A day in the life of a child with cystic fibrosis is a day in which concentrated effort is expended merely to keep breathing. Upon arising, during the day and before retiring, David receives inhalation therapy and

postural drainage therapy for about 15 minutes per session.

David has an aerosol mist machine with a face mask. The machine pumps medicated mist which David inhales deeply into his lungs. There, the medication works to break up the thick mucus which clogs the air passages.

For about ten minutes at a time, David's mother gives him postural drainage therapy. This involves David's lying face down, with pillows piled beneath his stomach and waist, so that the lung and chest area is lower than the rest of his body. Mrs. Umberger then firmly taps David on the back and sides, in the lung area, with cupped hands. This helps to loosen the mucus in the lungs so that David can cough it up and breathe more freely.

At night, David again breathes the medicated mist. He sleeps within a plastic tent, into which the mist is pumped throughout the night. Without the tent, David would be kept awake much of the night, coughing and wheezing and gasping for breath.

Although to the casual observer the Umbergers might seem to have reason to be depressed, the family is a cheerful, optimistic group.

"We are fortunate," says Mrs. Umberger, "that David was born in 1968. If he had been born 10 or 15 years earlier, we might not still have him with us. Back in

the 1950's, when the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation was first organized, children with C-F usually did not reach school age.

"Now, because of the research and education functions of the Foundation, many cystic fibrosis children are reaching 18 and 20 years of age.

"The Foundation," she declares earnestly, "is buying time for children with cystic fibrosis and other lung-damaging diseases."

Mrs. Umberger works hard for the Foundation. She is a member of the board of directors of the Central Pennsylvania Chapter, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. She is currently serving as Rural Southwestern

Lebanon County Chairman for the Breath of Life Campaign to raise funds to support the Foundation's activities.

The Umbergers and other parents of cystic fibrosis children are working diligently to help raise funds to aid in research which may result in a cure for the disease. Eventually, the Foundation hopes to be able to trace the gene which causes the disease and to wipe out cystic fibrosis completely.

In the meantime, through research and education, it is helping to keep children breathing and living - whether they live in crowded cities or in a sunny Lebanon County.

## Musical group featured at women's convention

"Them There Guys," a local musical group, will be the featured entertainment at the Berks County Society of Farm Women annual convention to be held October 4, 1975 at the Kutztown Grange Hall. Another part of the program will be a talk on flower arranging by Audrey Ann of Fleetwood. In addition to the annual business

meeting, awards will be presented for best local society scrapbooks, attendance and safety programs. Attendance is expected to total over one hundred fifty including many presidents from counties throughout the state and state president, Mrs. Ruth Richards.

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