

Miracle

(continued from page 1)

"The first red-letter day for us was the first time that Josh cried while having blood work," Becky said. "We felt badly that he had to be stuck with needles, but were thrilled that for the first time in his life, Josh had reacted appropriately to a painful experience."

Josh faced seemingly insurmountable odds - his lungs had been scarred from the oxygen treatments necessary at his birth, slowing his mental and physical development.

During his first two years he regularly battled infections, respiratory failure, pneumonia and severe asthma attacks which left him dependent on an oxygen ventilator.

His many trips to Geisinger set a new hospital record - more than 1,000 total days as an inpatient.

While fighting for his life during one of his stays in the pediatric intensive care unit, Josh officially became Becky's and Tom's son.

Becky's first act as his legal mother was to give permission to have his tracheostomy tube redone so that he could be put on an oxygen ventilator.

"Josh really needed the ventilator because he was using so much of his energy simply breathing that he wasn't growing," Becky said. "We gave his body some time to catch up."

After his third birthday he was finally allowed to come home, although he still had to use the ventilator to breathe. The ventilator has now been replaced by a portable oxygen machine, which he is gradually being weaned from.

"Thinking of what Josh went through, and what the family went through, at the beginning it really is a miracle," Becky Kupstas said.

Becky made the 120-mile round trip to Danville every day for two

"It's great to be the miracle child. The doctors made me better."

Josh Kupstas
Children's Miracle Network poster child

months to learn how to care for him.

The family's two older children, Jeff and Beth, had been involved in their parents' decision to take in foster children and were very supportive, learning how to give their younger brother his medicine and help with his treatments.

"Josh has been dead four times," Becky Kupstas said. "Once, when he was really sick and his doctors didn't know what to do, the only thing that I could think of was to scream at him, 'You can't die! Too many people love you!' And he pulled through."

Later, Josh casually mentioned to his mother, "I was with the angels. I was with Gabriel."

"We had never told him who Gabriel was," she said.

Today the sunny seven-year-old loves macaroni and cheese and Spaghetti-O's, "making up stories" on his computer and playing Nintendo, which Jeff taught him.

"I like Super Mario 3 and Ninja Turtles in Time," Josh grinned.

"He's quick," Jeff said. "He's got great coordination - he picked up Nintendo in no time."

Josh's varied tastes in music range from the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Nirvana and Danzig to Frank Sinatra and '70's music. One of his prize possessions is a Marky Mark autographed T-shirt.

His ultimate goal is to attend a



RELAXING WITH THE FAMILY - Seven-year-old Josh Kupstas enjoys a quiet moment with his parents, Tom and Becky Kupstas, his brother, Jeff and sister, Beth. Josh was recently named the poster child for Geisinger Hospital's Children's Miracle Network Telethon.

POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

rock concert and stand in the mosh pit.

"He gets into my room and turns up my stereo's bass and volume all the way," Beth laughed. "I find my rock tapes in the weirdest places in the house."

In addition to Jeff and Beth, Josh has an older brother and younger sister by birth, whom he has met and played with.

In his home schooling sessions he has learned to do math, write

his name and use his computer.

Josh also dresses himself, picks up his toys, empties the silverware from the dishwasher and helps his mom dust.

When Becky cooks, Josh is her taster. And he knows how to heat his beloved Spaghetti-O's in the microwave.

Of the family's four dogs and two cats, Josh's best buddy is Zack, a white shepherd mix.

He isn't fazed at all by his upcoming duties as the miracle child: opening a pro-am golf tournament, being present at the Miracle Kids' Lunch, an appearance on WNEP-TV and being the official starter of a motorcycle race from Geisinger-Wyoming Valley to Knoebel's Grove.

"Yes!" he grinned, giving the thumbs up sign, when asked if he was looking forward to the motorcycle race.

"We don't know how much Josh will be able to accomplish," Becky said. "We know that he will be handicapped for the rest of his life - but he won't be crippled. He will live his life to the fullest, using all of the gifts that God has given him."

Josh has already surpassed all of his doctors' expectations, Becky said. They never expected him to be able to walk, and really weren't sure what he would be able to do.

"Why am I the miracle child?" he asked a reporter.

His father answered, "Because when everybody else gave up on you, we didn't. You're a real fighter."

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by Dave

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Kingston Township rec center damaged by fire

Kingston Township police are investigating a fire which two patrolmen discovered in the building housing a storage room and lavatories at the Center Street recreation park at 11 p.m. April 17.

Patrolmen Wade Curtis and Robert Weiss called the Shavertown and Trucksville fire companies after finding smoke billowing out from under the eaves of the building, according to the police report.

Most of the damage was con-

fined to the storage area, where some PVC pipes melted from the heat, police said. Very few materials were in the storage room.

Firefighters had to break the skylights open to vent the building.

Damage was estimated at \$1,500 to \$2,000, police said.

Trooper Andy Petros of the Pennsylvania State Police fire marshal's office has been called in to assist the investigation.

Sergeant Michael Moravec is investigating the incident.

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Published Wednesdays
675-5211
Fax: 675-3650

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612
Shipping Address: 45 Main Road, Dallas PA 18612
Office hours: Monday - Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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The Dallas Post (USPS 147-720)
Published weekly by Bartsen Media, Inc. \$18 per year in Luzerne and Wyoming counties (PA); \$20 elsewhere in PA, NY or NJ; \$22 all other states. Second-class postage paid at Dallas PA.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612.

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