

Boy getting chance at life

Six-year-old going to Toronto hospital for bone-marrow transplant

Today, six-year-old Bretton Kinslow will go to Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto for a bone-marrow transplant that will most probably save his life.

On Nov. 8, 2007, he was diagnosed with the same genetic disease that killed his brother, Zachery Hall, in 2006: Adrenoleukodystrophy or ALD.

Since that day, the energetic boy and his family have been waiting at their Hatchet Lake home with fingers crossed for a phone call with news of a stem cell match.

That call came on Jan. 28.

"I can actually tell you that it was like a stack of bricks taken off my shoulders," said Bretton's mother, Lisa Kinslow. "I felt so much relief, but at the same time, fear."

The procedure Bretton will go through over the next six weeks is as dangerous as it is necessary.

For 11 days, his small body will go through chemotherapy to kill the existing marrow in his bones.

The stem cells from the umbilical cord of a donor who was found to be a match will then replace the marrow.

Every cell in his body will be renewed, which will help stop the deterioration of the grade-primary student's nervous system caused by the rare disease that was depicted in the 1992 film *Lorenzo's Oil*.

Bretton kept himself busy yesterday afternoon, preparing for his big trip.

"He's pretty excited," Kinslow said as Bretton chattered to her in the background. "I don't think he understands the intensity of what we're doing, but he knows that he's going to be sick and all that."

What he's most excited about is a new toy he's bringing along on the journey.

"I got a wicked PSP game," he said excitedly over the phone. "Guess what it can do? It can do movies and music, pictures and play my games."

He's not allowed to open the portable Playstation unit until he reaches the hospital because it has to be sterile.

As thrilled as Kinslow and her husband, Mark, are about Bretton's coming treatment, they've been told repeatedly about the danger of the procedure.

"It's devastating to us, but at the same time, if we don't do this, the sad reality is that we know (what will happen)," she said. "We have the bad advantage of already knowing what the inevitable is."

She said she wishes doctors had caught the disease in her son Zach earlier and hopes Bretton's story will shed light on the terrible disease.

"If I would want anything to come out of my son's death, it's that more doctors recognize this disease in family practices and look for signs in the family office."

In addition to dealing with Bretton's illness, Kinslow lost her sister Colleen Boudreau-Haddad and three-year-old niece Seylna Boudreau-Haddad in a head-on collision Dec. 15.

Bretton's aunt, Jo-Anne Conrod, and family lawyer David Fraser with McInnes Cooper set up a trust fund in December to aid the boy and his family.

Conrod has also helped organize a fundraiser at the Hammonds Plains Fire Hall on March 8 for the same cause.

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