



Burn Injury Does Not Stop Star Athlete

Kevin Stroughter is an all-star athlete with letters in football, basketball, track and baseball from his high school in Citrus Heights, Calif. But those are not the only reasons he is considered an inspiration by his peers.

When Stroughter was 8 years old, he and a group of friends were playing in a field near his house in Rodeo, Calif., when they discovered a can of gasoline. They lit a tree stake they found in the grass and tossed gasoline on it to fuel the fire. The wind shifted and Kevin's clothing became engulfed in flames.

Hours later, Kevin arrived by ambulance at Shriners Hospitals for Children® — Northern California in critical condition with burns over 70 percent of his body. He was given a 50 percent chance of survival and spent

the next eight months in the hospital's pediatric burn unit.

"I think they saved my baby's life," says Kevin's mother Audra Sipp, who spent long days and nights at her son's bedside.

Kevin endured several surgeries for skin grafts, dressing changes and many hours of physical therapy during his stay in the hospital. "It was hard," Kevin recalls. "But I learned not to give up."

Though he was often in pain, Kevin tried to make the best of the situation. While in the hospital, he trick-or-treated at the Halloween party, cast a line at the Shriners Kids Fishing Derby, celebrated his birthday and met NBA star Matt Barnes when he was playing for the Sacramento Kings.

By the time Kevin left the hospital,

his family had relocated to Sacramento to be closer to Shriners Hospitals for Children®.

When he started third grade, his mother followed him from the hospital to the school and sat in the classroom until the teachers convinced her Kevin would be fine.

"Kevin is an example of why we work so hard to care for these critically ill children," says David Greenhalgh, M.D., Chief of Burn Surgery at Shriners Hospitals for Children® — Northern California. "They can get through it and do extremely well."

Kevin returns to the hospital regularly for check-ups and surgeries to ensure he retains movement in his arms and other parts of his body that were scarred by the burns.

As a high school athlete, he has shown himself to be fast and flexible. Kevin plays running back on the football team, center on the basketball team and broke a league record for the fastest 100-yard dash in track. Georgetown University and the University of Oregon have expressed interest in him.

"We are delighted to see him do so well," says Dr. Greenhalgh. "He has always had an excellent attitude and that has contributed to a great outcome for him."

— Some information in this story was obtained from an article in the Sacramento Bee.

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