



Thanks to Shriners Hospitals for Children, Deanna is Doing Just Fine



Deanna Muir, 12, has been a patient at Shriners Hospitals for Children — Chicago since she was 2 years old.

Twelve-year-old Deanna Muir doesn't remember life before her spinal cord injury. When she was just a year-and-a-half old, she was involved in a car accident that occurred in her driveway. Initially, doctors thought she had escaped the ordeal with a few broken bones.

"They kept telling me how lucky she was," said Deanna's mom, Cynthia Muir. "But then a nurse noticed that she wasn't moving her feet, so more tests were ordered. That's when they discovered she was paralyzed from the chest down."

After spending a few months at a rehabilitation facility, her parents learned about Shriners Hospitals for Children — Chicago. At the very first appointment, Lawrence C. Vogel, M.D., medical director of the spinal cord injury program at the

hospital, prescribed braces to keep Deanna's feet straight and a body brace for her spine. He also gave them ideas to help Deanna move around the house and develop independence.

As is true of all care offered at Shriners Hospitals for Children, the spinal cord injury rehabilitation program is family-centered and interdisciplinary, offering each patient a complete, easily accessible care program. The interdisciplinary team can include spine surgeons, orthopaedic surgeons, pediatricians, physiatrists, psychologists, social workers, several therapists and teachers.

"The people at Shriners Hospital were miracle workers," Cynthia said. "Until we came there, the stroller was her only outlet for mobility. We didn't realize that she had to stand in order for her legs to grow, and we were able to construct a device to help her stand. We also created a little racecar with wheels on it so she could push herself around the house."

During elementary school, Deanna used a standing device that allowed her to move around unassisted by manipulating the upper body. The device was helpful at the time, but by middle school, Deanna decided a wheelchair would be easier to maneuver.

Like many young patients with spinal cord injuries, Deanna developed scoliosis as she grew. In 2003, doctors at Shriners Hospitals for Children treated the problem by placing rods in her spine. She has surgery twice a year so they can be expanded for growth, but according to her mom, that doesn't bother her a bit.

"She loves going to Shriners," Cynthia said. "I've never seen a kid that doesn't mind having surgery. We know everyone there, which is the best experience because it's so comfortable and inviting. It's like a second home."

Deanna's interests include playing on the computer and making jewelry. She also enjoys camping and singing in the choir at school.

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