

Great Saves

Denver Health's Trauma Newsletter
Spring 2010



Nolan Downey Page 1



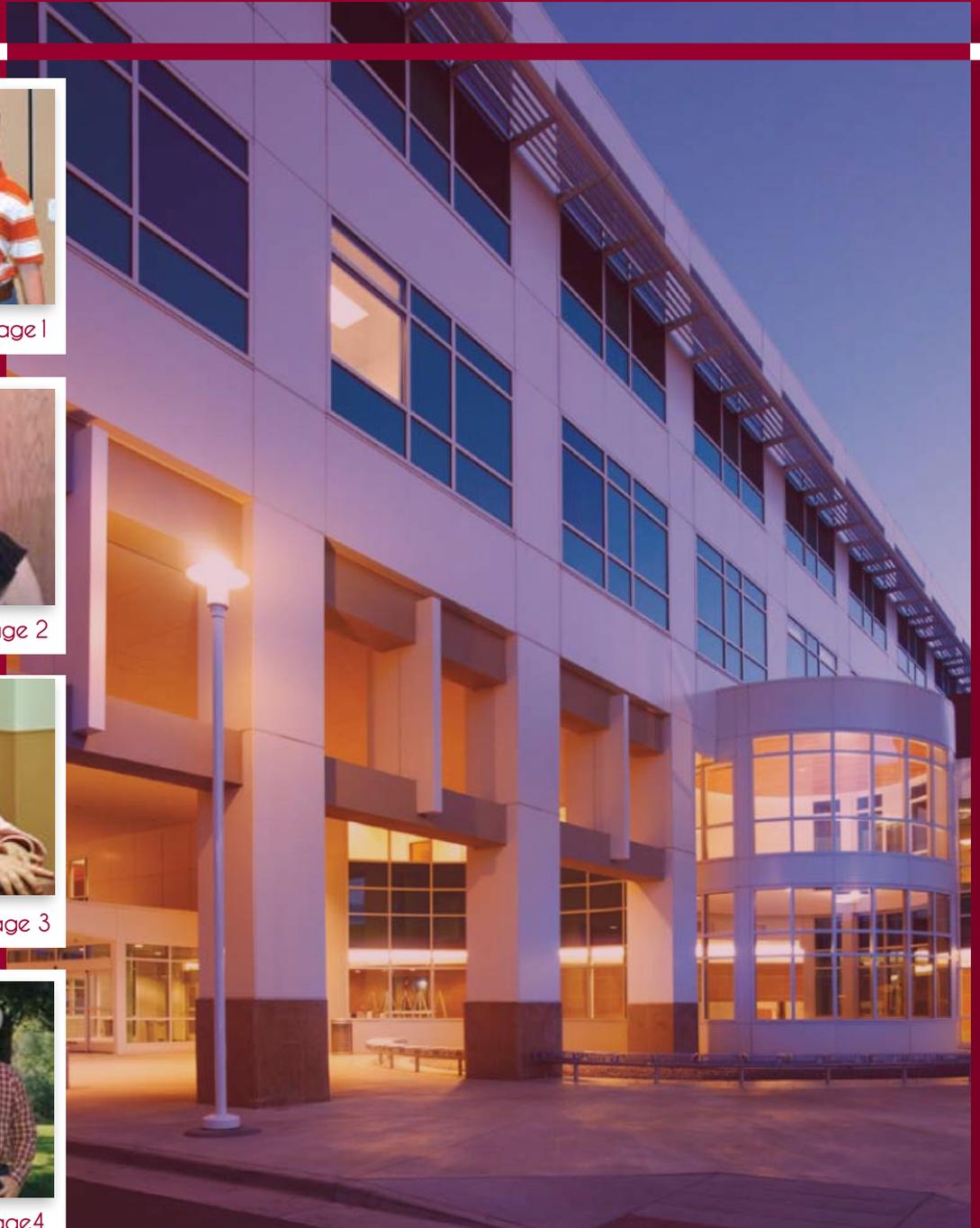
Roxanne Zube Page 2



Kyah Burrer Page 3



Benjamin ayre Page 4



Nolan Downey

In August 2008, Nolan sustained an accidental gunshot wound to the head and was found approximately one hour later by his mother. He was transported eight miles to Prowers Medical Center in Lamar, Colo., but was unresponsive to treatment. Emergency Department physicians at Prowers Medical Center predicted a bleak outcome for Nolan.

Just as the situation seemed hopeless, Nolan showed signs of life, prompting Dr. Oleszek to make a phone call to Denver Health. Nolan was flown into Denver via fixed-wing aircraft and then transported via ambulance to Denver Health.

"Nolan was suffering from a very severe brain injury with multiple skull fractures," explains Dr. Kathryn Beauchamp, chief, Neurosurgery, Denver Health. "He was a very critical case."

Nolan was taken directly to an operating room at Denver Health where Dr. Beauchamp and her team were waiting for him. Dr. Beauchamp immediately began operating on Nolan, removing fractured pieces of bone and bullet from his brain.

The first 72 hours after Nolan's surgery were anxious ones as doctors warned his family of possible dangers including stroke, pneumonia, seizures, swelling etc.

"I was overwhelmed at the level of service we received at Denver Health," said Nolan's father Jesse Downey. "Staff stayed late, they came in on their days off; they were all dedicated to helping Nolan and doing anything they could to save him."

Today, Nolan is a fully-functioning, capable and happy teenage boy, who recently came back to Denver Health to celebrate his recovery with his former doctors and nurses.

"Nolan's recovery is remarkable," says Dr. Beauchamp. "Young people often recover well, but his story is quite amazing based on the extent of his initial injury."

Facts

Name of Referring Physician —
Ken Oleszek, M.D.

Referring Facility —
Prowers Medical Center, Lamar, Colorado

Mode of Transport —
Wing airplane/Ambulance

Denver Health Surgeon —
Kathryn Beauchamp, M.D., Chief,
Neurosurgery



Roxanne Zube

As a mother, Roxanne Zube's main focus is always on the care of her two young girls. So when Roxanne's arm was nearly severed at the elbow in a 20-car-pileup on I-80 between Laramie and Cheyenne, Wyo., all she could think of was how she would care for her children with only one arm.

October 2009, Roxanne was the passenger in a vehicle traveling from Rawlins to her home town of Torrington. At the time, a relentless blizzard was creating hazardous driving conditions with zero visibility and ice covered roads. Roxanne's vehicle was unable to avoid a pileup involving 17 semi-trucks and several other vehicles.

Roxanne's car crashed into the already smashed vehicles and before she could catch her breath, another truck slammed into her door, nearly severing her arm at the elbow.

An ambulance rushed Roxanne to Cheyenne Regional Medical Center where her injury was assessed and it was determined that she needed the skills of the surgeons at Denver Health - and time was of the essence.

However, one thing stood between Roxanne and Denver Health; the blizzard was still raging, making the 103 miles to Denver Health nearly impossible to navigate.

Roxanne's salvation came in the form of a convoy of Wyoming Department of Transportation snowplows that

gave her ambulance a personal escort to the state line, where the Colorado Department of Transportation snow plows took over, plowing the way to Denver Health.

"I later learned that if I would have stayed in Cheyenne the only option would have been to amputate my arm," says Roxanne. "I feel so lucky that so many people came together to get me to Denver Health where they saved my arm."

At Denver Health, Roxanne underwent several surgeries performed by Kagan Ozer, M.D., replantation and microsurgeon.

"Roxanne's case was very complicated. The whole arm was torn and mangled," said Dr. Ozer, who explains that Roxanne's case involved shortening bones, performing skin grafts, as well as taking a vein from her leg and muscle from her back to reconstruct her arm.

It has been four months since Roxanne's accident. She receives physical therapy three times a week to retrain her muscles and tendons, and she has successfully regained some movement in her fingers and thumb.

"Every time I go to physical therapy, I see a little bit of improvement. That little bit is enough to make me keep going," explains Roxanne. "I'm just so grateful to Dr. Ozer. He is amazing. He saved my arm, and he gave me hope."

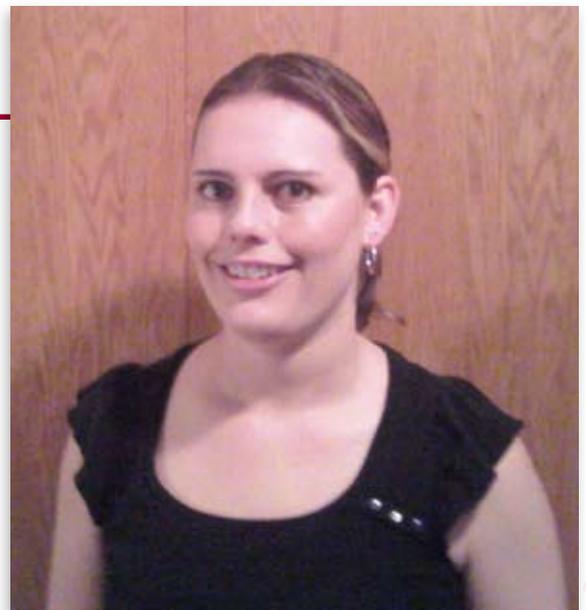
Facts

Name of Referring Physician – Richard Fermelia, M.D.

Referring Facility – Cheyenne Regional Medical Center, Cheyenne, Wyoming

Mode of Transport – Ambulances, escorted by Wyoming Department of Transportation snow plows and Colorado Department of Transportation snow plows

Denver Health Surgeon – Kagan Ozer, M.D., Replantation/Microsurgeon



Kyah Burrer

September 2009, was just a normal quiet day for 18-month-old Kyah Burrer and her mother, Sharon, until suddenly the day changed drastically.

Kyah was holding onto the leash of the family dog, Rawl, when something spooked the dog and he took off. Kyah fell to the ground crying. As her mother came to her aid she discovered blood. She frantically checked Kyah to see where she was injured and discovered the shocking reality that Kyah's right hand had been severed from her wrist.

"There are no words to explain the fear you feel for your child when something like that happens," explains Sharon who desperately started picking up the pieces of Kyah's hand and began screaming for help.

Neighbors came to help, and together they applied pressure and wrapped towels around Kyah's wrist, fastening the towels with a belt. They called 911 and an ambulance took her to Wyoming Medical Center in Casper.

Doctors at Wyoming Medical Center were able to stabilize Kyah but informed Sharon that she would need to be flown to Denver Health if there was any chance of reattaching the hand.

Denver Health Trauma Coordinator Debra Carpenter immediately paged Kagan Ozer, M.D., replantation and microsurgeon. Dr. Ozer, fellowship-trained in hand and microsurgery, immediately returned the call and came to the hospital to wait for Kyah.

Dr. Ozer performed surgery on Kyah. He was able to repair her nerves and reattach her hand.

Today, Kyah is an active 23-month-old girl. Her left hand has taken over as her dominant hand, and she is able to use her right hand as a brace to hold objects. She sees Dr. Ozer every three to four weeks and shows signs of improvement at every visit.

Dr. Ozer explains that it is difficult to determine the amount of sensation that children feel, but he is confident that Kyah's reattachment and nerve repair was successful because she experiences sweating in her palm.

"I will never be able to express with words how grateful I am to Dr. Ozer," says Sharon. "He came in on his day off and did something I never thought possible, he reattached my daughter's hand and it is working."

Facts

Name of Referring Physician — James D. Yakel, M.D.

Referring Facility — Wyoming Medical Center, Casper, Wyoming

Mode of Transport — Helicopter

Denver Health Surgeon - Kagan Ozer, M.D., Replantation/Microsurgeon



Ben Ayre

Fifty percent of the hand's function comes from the thumb, so when Ben Ayre, 19, lost his thumb in a rodeo accident, the aspiring veterinarian began weighing his options.

In March 2009, Ben's thumb was separated at the base in a rodeo event featuring a steer and two mounted cowboys. He was taken to Glendive Medical Center in Glendive Mont., where Joe Leal, M.D., was in charge of his care.

Dr. Leal contacted Denver Health in hope of salvaging Ben's thumb.

Kagan Ozer, M.D., replantation/microsurgeon, was able to reattach Ben's thumb, but with little hope of it ever regaining mobility.

"Ben had significant crushing at the base of this thumb, and there were no viable vessels left," said Dr. Ozer. "But we tried replantation as a first option."

But the replantation was not taking. Dr. Ozer then shared some alternate treatments with Benjamin's family — one of which was replacing Ben's non-functioning thumb with his second toe.

Ben's mother, Joyce Ayre, says that the family carefully considered all options and researched the information that Dr. Ozer provided. Ultimately, the decision was made that the toe/thumb transplant was the best decision, and that Dr. Ozer was the right surgeon for the job.

"Dr. Ozer was very helpful, and we trust him a lot," said Joyce. "Dr. Ozer was confident in his ability to perform the surgery and we were confident in him as well. We think Dr. Leal did a great job assessing and then referring us to Dr. Ozer. To me they both cared very deeply for Ben and his future. Their compassion and skills from their efforts shine through with the results."

Ben's toe/thumb transplant was successfully completed in April 2009. The complicated procedure involved attaching the two main nerves in the base of the missing thumb to the corresponding nerves in the replacement toe. It also required that the blood vessels and two main tendons responsible for flexing and extending be connected.

Ben's right hand is now essentially comparable to his left hand in terms of grip strength, pinch and use for daily living tasks.

While still attending school, Ben has returned to the rodeo circuit, and is now working as an intern with a veterinarian during summer months.

Facts

Name of Referring Physician —
Joe Leal, M.D.

Referring Facility —
Glendive Medical Center, Glendive, Montana

Mode of Transport — Airlight, St. Vincent Healthcare
to Denver Health

Denver Health Surgeon — Kagan Ozer, M.D., Replantation/Microsurgeon





777 Bannock Street
Mail Code 0206
Denver, CO 80204-4507

PRESORTED STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
DENVER, CO
PERMIT NO. 00174

The Denver Health's Rocky Mountain
Regional Trauma Center is never on divert.

We always have a bed for your trauma patient!

Call 1-866-348-7286 for a referral or consult.

denverhealth.org