

# PARKER ROBINSON

As Parker's Dad, the sweltering summer of 2005 was one of the hardest for me. We lived in busy Indio, California, far away from our quiet home in Oregon. Little Parker was 4 years old and full of life and enthusiasm, ready to take on anything that came his way... until the day he wasn't. He had come down with a mysterious flu-like illness. The illness had run for nearly 2 weeks until Parker's mom, Rachel, noticed that his legs were starting to swell and turn purple. After our second trip to the doctor's office, Dr. Freeman had no other option but to admit Little Parker into John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Indio, CA.

By the end of his second night in the hospital, it was clear that Parker was getting worse. The doctors were unable to control his soaring temperatures and had no explanation for his leg swelling and extreme discoloration. By this time Little Parker could no longer get out of bed or walk. Blood draw after blood draw was taken, but doctors were no closer to an accurate diagnosis. In fact, they were really starting to reach, ordering tests for Meningitis, Scarlet Fever, and even West Nile Virus... all negative. The next step was a highly invasive spinal tap, but they would need to get his temperature to stabilize first.

By the end of day three in the hospital, Parker's temperature had gone into the blazing 106-7 range and would not stop rising. I followed Dr. Freeman into the hallway and asked if he thought they could treat his temperature. Dr. Freeman looked at me and said, "Honestly Geoff, we're slowly losing him." My soul was crushed and I felt dizzy, unsure if I could stay on my feet. I didn't even have the strength to tell Rachel what the doctor had said to me. Uncle Parker came to visit us that night in the hospital and I have never cried harder as he hugged me.

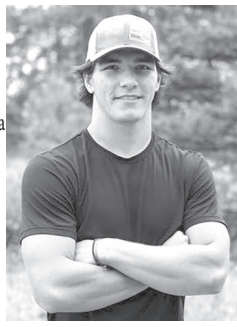
The next morning I was awakened to a nurse who said with a big smile, "Best news in a week!" Parker's temperature had dropped about half a degree from the dangerous temperature he had been at the previous day. I looked at the nurse, and she was a glowing angel in my eyes. By the next day, Parker's temperature had dropped another degree and the doctors were genuinely encouraged. The day after that, the doctors were starting to talk about a discharge date. The weight of the world was slowly coming off my back, to say the least.

As we neared our discharge hour, I was plagued by the doctor's open concern about potential long-term effects of the illness. He explained to us that due to his high sustained temperature and swelling, there was the distinct possibility of long term damage. Dr. Freeman was particularly concerned about Parker's legs, because they were never able to gain an accurate diagnosis of what ailment had afflicted them.

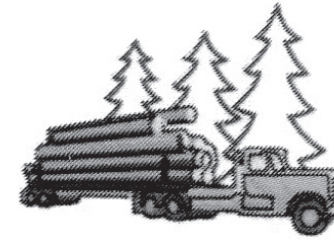
I can still remember driving away from the hospital with my son in the back seat, and feeling so incredibly blessed that he was alive. I didn't care that he might not be able to run well, or be athletic... I had my son home with me. Within a few weeks, Little Parker was seemingly able to play normally again, despite the doctor's warning not to have unrealistic expectations. So when youth soccer started up that fall, I told myself just to be glad that he was healthy enough to play. When we got to the first game of the 4/5-year-old soccer season, I was nervous. What if he couldn't run as fast as the other kids? What if his legs didn't work right? He seemed okay at practice, but this was finally his first chance to participate at full speed.

As the first quarter of the game went on, it became quickly apparent that Little Parker had no trouble with his legs. To steal a line from Forrest Gump - "Now you wouldn't believe me if I told you, but [he] could run like the wind blows!" And Little Parker could do more than just run! His feet were quick and nimble and he could move the soccer ball around seamlessly. He began scoring goals that day, and scoring goals, and scoring goals. The game ended with our team ahead 9 to 0. Little Parker had scored 9 goals. Maybe he hadn't mastered passing or sharing the ball yet, but that's another chapter.

On the way home that day, I remember feeling so relieved to know that Little Parker's legs were apparently healthy and that he would be able to do anything he wanted with his life. That's when I thought to myself, "I always loved to wrestle while I was growing up, maybe he would be OK at that too..."



# BARNES DIESEL POWER



**PATRICK O'REILLY  
OWNER**

**62507 COMMERCE RD.  
LA GRANDE, OR 97850  
OFFICE: 541-963-7146  
CELL: 541-786-4922**

# LEGACY

541-963-2161  
1-800-996-1707  
Fax 541-963-1674

LINCOLN

2906 Island Ave  
La Grande, OR 97850  
[www.legacyfordlincoln.com](http://www.legacyfordlincoln.com)

**24 Hour Towing Saturday Service Rental Cars**

# CB'S

## Septic and Portable Restrooms

1-800-774-5900

**We also provide  
inspection and  
cleaning for septic  
tank systems to keep  
them healthy and  
safe for you and  
your family.**

**For more  
information  
give us a call  
541-963-5231 or  
1-800-774-5900**



**CB's offers portable restrooms as  
well as professional septic tank  
services to Northeast Oregon.**

**Specializing in portable restrooms that  
are perfect for outdoor events.**