

rive on December 6. And then on December 3, another tragedy struck. The Vernonia area received over eleven inches of rain in twenty-four hours, leading to severe flooding and damage to many homes in the region. One of the homes flooded was Dean and Kendra's. "Sylas and I were at home when we received a phone call to expect flooding," said Kendra. "I had already put up Christmas decorations so I had big empty Rubbermaid tubs sitting around. I threw clothes, diapers and baby food in for Sylas and some photo albums." Kendra and Sylas got out safely and stayed with friends. Their home ended up with four feet of water in it. "We lost practically everything," said Kendra. The family has since relocated to a different house in Vernonia, a rental on high ground.



I first visited with the family in June of this year. Dean was getting ready to return to the Rehabilitation Institute of Oregon (RIO) at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland for the third time. Dean's recovery and progress had been amazing. The family has seen improvements they were told were not possible. Dean has regained some of his vision - he can now see out of the upper left quadrant of both eyes which forces him to tilt and turn his head to see. Although he is not able

to walk yet, he is now sitting up longer since having back surgery in mid-April that relieved a lot of pressure and pain he was experiencing. His overall strength is better. He is now able to support himself and get himself into a sitting position from bed. He was having unexplained cold body temperature on the right side which has recently improved. And he has regained a lot of speech ability. "It's amazing how far he has come," said Terry. "He had to relearn how to do everything. Everything!"

Terry was so confident about Dean's ability to improve that they applied for and got deer tags for hunting this fall with the hope that Dean will be able to go along. And he has even bigger ambitions for Dean. "My goal is to get him back out and falling trees in the woods," said Terry. Kendra grimaces at this. "None of the women in the family want to hear that, but that is my hope," said Terry. Dean remained conspicuously silent on the issue.

Terry talked about Dean's retention of his memories. "That has been so

important - that he remembers so much from before. He has had no loss of memory." It was initially a big concern because doctors didn't know how much permanent damage was done during the brain surgery they had done. But Dean is very sharp which he demonstrated during our visits. Kendra and Terry were trying to remember the date when Dean first came home and were going back and forth about whether it was February or March. Dean finally piped in and informed them he came home on January 17th for a month before heading to the RIO Rehab facility in February.



He also recited the phone number from memory when Kendra was ordering pizza for dinner. When first watching the Ax Men Series on television, a show that features logging outfits from the northwest Oregon area, Dean pointed out a spot where the Browning crew was working. "He said that was almost exactly where his accident happened," said Terry. "Having all his memory has just been so important."

Dean sees it a little differently. "It's a blessing and a curse," said Dean. When asked, "Why a curse?" Dean

responded, "Because I can remember what I was." **I spoke with Kendra after Dean's return home from RIO a month later.** "We saw a huge improvement," said Kendra. "He is doing transfers on his own although he needs someone to spot him. But Dean is 'Mr. Independent', so he doesn't always like to wait for help." Kendra says the physical therapist at RIO is hopeful that Dean will be able to walk using a walker within six months. "Dean called me from RIO one night and told me that he had stood and balanced himself and that he felt like he was improving. That's the first time he's expressed something like that to me," said Kendra. Immediately upon his return from RIO, Dean began work at the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Center (BIRC) in Portland, heading there five a days a week for full days of occupational, cognitive and memory therapy work. "It's like a job for him," said Kendra.

Kendra said Dean seems to be more motivated now and has a better attitude. "He likes to get down and play on the floor with Sylas," she said.

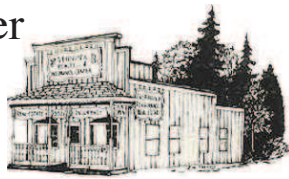
But of course, a family dealing with all that Dean and Kendra are dealing with still has problems and concerns. They are not sure how much Dean will recover of his speech or vision capabilities, and he continues to have problems with balance and dizziness.

There is also the issue of a place to live. Some local residents had developed a plan to build a new home for the Schaumburgs. Land was donated in town, out of the flood plain. Contractors agreed to donate their time and materials were promised. A design was developed. Plans were underway to start construction this summer. And then the project hit a snag. Project planner Casey Mitchell explains. "We determined that if Dean ends up needing medical care for a long time, that Medicaid could attach a lien on any property he and Kendra own and encumber the title. So when Dean and Kendra are gone, Sylas could have been required to pay back that lien. And we wanted the family to be able to own the house free and clear of any debts. So we have been working with some attorneys who specialize in elder care and trusts, and they are putting together an absolute best case for the family. The key was whose name goes on the building permit. It has held up construction this summer, but we thought it was worth slowing down and getting it right. So we hope to have the trust recorded by early August, and then we are ready to break ground."

Kendra continues to view her family's new life with a positive attitude. When asked if there are things about their situation that she finds especially difficult, she struggled to find a response. Then she said, "Dean can be impatient, but I'm impatient too." Recently Kendra was able to go away with her parents for the first time since the accident, leaving Dean in the care of friends and family. Kendra was able to go four-wheeling at Sand Lake for a long weekend. "I had to change my own spark plugs," said Kendra, finally finding something difficult in her situation. "Dean used to take care of that for me."

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