

ROCKWELL:

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agnosed with cancer. She said she became concerned when she was changing Mateo's diaper one day and discovered one testicle was bigger than the other. When she took him to the pediatrician, the doctor knew something was wrong, as did the urologist Mateo saw next. Natasha Rockwell said the doctor knew it was cancer but didn't tell the family until the tests confirmed Mateo had testicular cancer. The mass, along with Mateo's testicle, was removed to prevent the spread of the cancer. Natasha Rockwell said it was a small price to pay for Mateo's life.

With the mass removed and because the cancer had not spread, Mateo was spared chemotherapy, but he did have to have follow-up scans every three months and then every six months for three years. Because he had to lay perfectly still during the scans, he was administered an IV and a medication that put him to sleep.

"We only had one scare during that time frame," Natasha said.

During that time, Natasha became involved with



JESSICA KELLER PHOTO

Mateo Rockwell, 9, watches as his brother Nikolai plays a video game outside their home in Boardman last week. Mateo will serve as the grand marshal, with his mother, Natasha, at the Hermiston Relay for Life Friday and Saturday at Armand Larive Middle School. Mateo survived testicular cancer as an infant.

Relay for Life at the invitation of a former co-worker, and the family, including Mateo, has been involved in the event ever since.

It was during Mateo's first survivor walk that Natasha said she finally let herself cry about her son's

cancer. She said, before then, she felt she had to be strong for her family and couldn't let everyone see how upset she was.

Her oldest son, however, Hans Rockwell, who was 9 at the time, was es-

pecially impacted by his brother's cancer.

"I think he was able to see it from a different angle than the other kids," Natasha Rockwell said.

Hans Rockwell said he was afraid for his baby brother, although he didn't

know much about cancer then.

"I knew it was bad, and I assumed once you had it, you were going to die," he said.

Natasha and Hans Rockwell both said they were happy about one thing, however.

"I'm grateful that he was so little because he wasn't old enough to be afraid or remember," Natasha said.

Mateo said the only thing he remembers is receiving a toy and laying on a bed in a room, during one of his treatment sessions.

Hans Rockwell, who dedicated his state wrestling championships from Riverside High School and got a tattoo in his brother's honor, said knowing his brother remembers any of it upsets him.

"I don't think anybody should have to remember that," he said.

Now, cancer free, Mateo is just starting to comprehend the significance of having cancer and the importance of Relay for Life, Natasha Rockwell said.

"At the beginning, we just referred to it as his parade because he was little and didn't understand what it was all about," Natasha Rockwell said.

Hans Rockwell said be-

cause of his brother's experience, he is committed to doing Relay for Life.

"I don't even care if it's here. I'll do it somewhere," said Rockwell, who will be a freshman at Oregon State University in the fall. "I think it's an important thing to be part of."

Natasha Rockwell said, while her family looks forward to every Relay for Life event, this year will be even more special because she and her son have been named grand marshals.

"It's definitely greatly appreciated and a huge, huge honor (to be grand marshal) but very humbling and motivating to work that much harder to spread the word about cancer and raise money so more kids and families can have the kind of battle that he did," Natasha Rockwell said.

Hans, who said he would like to speak at Friday's event, thinks, because his brother survived cancer, that God has a special purpose for Mateo and that he will do something great in his life, which inspires him to do bigger things as well.

"He just has a good time every day. He never has a bad day," Hans Rockwell said. "That's just how I try to live every day, like I'm bound for greatness, too."

FESTIVITIES:

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set up at the marina. The entertainment begins at 11 a.m. with Totally Kids, Round Up City Cloggers, Irrigon Knights Cheerleading, Sahara Bellydance and Umatilla Cheer.

BBPD, the Brad and Bruce Power Duo, start the live music lineup from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., followed by Finn Doxie, an alternative Celtic band, from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Local band Blue Tattoo will perform from 6 p.m. until the fireworks at 10 p.m.

"They are such a crowd pleaser," Hutchinson-Talaski said of Blue Tattoo. "They do a lot of covers of great songs. They play just old rock and roll. They're just a great band to listen to, and they're a lot of fun to watch."

Hutchinson-Talaski said the largest draw of the event is the first local fireworks display of the season. She said the show lasts about 20 minutes and costs the Chamber of Commerce about \$5,000. She said there is no admission charge for Landing Days, but a suggested \$3 donation for parking helps cover the cost of next year's fireworks.

Fewer people have volunteered to help at this year's event than in previous years, and Hutchinson-Talaski said she hopes people will continue to be involved and continue to support Landing Days.

"It's a fun event, and it's great for the community," she said. "It's one of the things that Umatilla does that's fun that should embrace the whole community. We hope everybody enjoys it all and has a great time."



HERMISTON HERALD FILE PHOTO

Fireworks lit up Umatilla Marina Park during last year's Umatilla Landing Days. This year, the event begins with a parade at 10:30 a.m. Saturday and concludes with fireworks at 10 p.m.



HERMISTON HERALD FILE PHOTO

Members of Girl Scout Troop 50117 ride on a float during last year's Umatilla Landing Days parade. This year, the parade begins at 10:30 a.m. in downtown Umatilla with festivities following at the Umatilla Marina Park until a fireworks display at 10 p.m.



HERMISTON HERALD FILE PHOTO

Members of the Desert Shrine Club drive up Sixth Street in Umatilla as part of the Umatilla Landing Days parade last year.

WEATHER:

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the lower elevations may still continue.

"Persons are urged to use caution when participating in outdoor activities such as working or recreational events

as heat exhaustion or stroke can easily occur. If you do not have air conditioning in your home, plan an outing that takes you to an air-conditioned location at least part of the day. Drink plenty of water or your favorite thirst-quencher beverage to prevent dehydration." If you plan on heading to

the river, keep in mind that local river temperatures are still relatively low. As of Tuesday afternoon, the Columbia River was 67 degrees Fahrenheit

at the McNary Dam, six degrees warmer than three weeks ago when temperatures last climbed into the triple digits.

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