



STAFF PHOTO BY JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
Zeddrik Cota, center, stands with three of the UCFD paramedics who responded after an accident that left him in a coma. Left to right: Danny Hinton, Kyle Rutherford and Jesse Brown.

Boy begins rehab journey

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

Three weeks after an accident that left him in a coma, Zeddrik Cota is walking and talking.

To his family, those things are nothing short of miraculous.

Zeddrik, 12, sat quietly Friday, with a smile on his face, as his parents recalled the last few weeks. He placed his hand on his mother's, and listened as she talked about his recovery.

While riding his bike on June 14, Zeddrik asked his father if he could go check out the skate park at Campus Life, across the street from Hermiston High School.

As his father got out of the car, Zeddrik and his brother went into the park, not realizing there was a sharp drop-off close to where they were standing.

"There's a lip that goes into a bowl that just drops off," said Oscar Cota, Zeddrik's father. "He goes up and over it, and faceplants into the concrete."

Zeddrik had swelling on both sides of his brain, and was in a medically induced

coma for four and a half days.

Within a day of coming out of the coma, Oscar said, his son's eyes were opening, and the day after, he was responding to questions, and able to recognize his parents and siblings.

Zeddrik has several months of rehabilitation ahead of him: He will go through occupational and speech therapy, and will have some dental work.

"He's had difficulty with a lot of stuff," Oscar said. "His short-term memory is pretty affected."

Paramedics who responded to the scene estimate Zeddrik fell about 10 or 12 feet from the dropoff.

Oscar said his son was wearing a baseball helmet at the time of the crash, which covered his ears and the side of his head.

Zeddrik's mother, Alaina Abbott, said he may be able to go to school for a few hours a day, but they will have to keep him protected from any illnesses or other injuries.

"I told him he's stuck in mom's bubble," Abbott said, smiling at her son. "He's really bored, just because he's so active."

During his recovery,

Zeddrik won't be able to do many of the things he loves — hunting, playing sports and exploring the outdoors. But his family says he fully intends to get back to his energetic self.

"Our whole family put in for bull tags. Guess who's the only one who got one?" Oscar said, pointing at his son. "Hopefully he'll be well enough to go up there, but we're not going to push it — it'll come again. At the end, hopefully it's going to be a full recovery."

Oscar said he and his family had been overwhelmed by the support of the town, even people he didn't know.

"How I'm going to thank each and every one of them, I have no idea," he said.

A week after his return to Hermiston, Zeddrik met with some of the paramedics, so that he and his family could thank them.

"We remember these ones," said Jesse Brown, the firefighter and EMT who called for a helicopter right after the accident.

"Far too often, the outcome is not the same way. So these are the calls we live for, where we made a difference."

Fourth of July full of fun

HERMISTON HERALD

As the sun went down and the sound of neighborhood fireworks began to fill the air, Hermiston's Fourth of July celebration was still going strong.

A pool party and 20 vendors kept visitors busy, as well as some new attractions scattered around Butte Park.

Steve Vickers of Nampa, Idaho, had brought 28 "bubble balls" — four to five-foot inflated balls with a hole in the middle — into which a child could be strapped. Kids bumped into each other and rolled around, occasionally going rogue and tumbling head-first into the sidelines.

"It's been crazy," Vickers said between checking in the long line of customers. "I've been doing this about three and a half years. I started with 12 bubbles, and now I have 90."

Vickers said his company, Vickers Entertainment, does between six and eight events per week.

Brandon Artz, recreation supervisor for the city of Hermiston, said the turnout was good, and they were expecting more people to come as the fireworks started at the park.

He said there were more than 100 staff members working the event, starting at 8 a.m. and going till about 11 p.m. on Wednesday.

Many families got to the park early, setting up blankets and chairs in prime spots.

The Zumaya family relaxed under some trees in the center of the park.

Flor and Juan and their daughter Gisela said they have lived in Hermiston for six years, and have come to the celebration before.

"To us, it's not a big deal," Flor said. "It's good. It's nice to be with family."

Stanfield

Stanfield residents didn't mind getting up



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS
Lifeguard Max Rahm, 16, of Hermiston watches the fireworks show in Butte Park on Wednesday from the Hermiston Family Aquatic Center. For more photos, see A13.

early on a holiday for one of the city's traditions: the annual Fourth of July celebration at Bard Park.

Many came decked out in patriotic colors and celebrated the nation's birthday by being with their family and friends, and participating in events many locals have come to look forward to each year.

By 8 a.m., the 3-on-3 basketball tournament was in full swing, drawing a crowd that grew for the parade later that morning, and other activities like a footrace and a pie contest.

"I've been doing this 30 years, and it's been going on longer than that," city public works director Scott Morris said of the event.

Stanfield's main street was lined with families

eagerly awaiting the floats in the parade, and children scattering to collect the candy. This year, parade entrants included a homemade Batmobile, horses and riders from the "Glory Riders of Oregon," and a Stanfield Library float.

Gurpal Singh, owner of Stanfield's Center Market, stood at the sidelines handing out free water and corn dogs to parade participants.

"It's always the best," he said of the parade. "Every year we do this."

Daniel and Lacey Sharp have organized the 3-on-3 tournament for the last 10 years. Daniel said they topped out at 35 teams.

For parade results, see the Stanfield Fourth of July story at www.hermiston-herald.com.

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- Rotary Breakfast 7:30-9:30am
- Vendor Booths
- Classic Car Show in the Park
- Eastern Oregon Art Show
- Club 24 Glow Run
- Chain Saw Wood Carvers
- KOHU/The Q Cash Machine
- Bounce Houses & Games

Festival Street Entertainment
9:00 Gems & Gents
9:30 Big Top the Clown
10:00 Hermiston School of Karate
12:00 Bram Brata Steel Band
1:00 Ribbon Cutting of Festival St.
1:15 Bath Tub Races
2:00 Wood Carver Auction
10:00/12:00/2:00 3rd St & Main Lawn Mower Drag Races

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