

ACTIVE TEENAGER DEFIES THE MEDICAL ODDS THANKS TO TISSUE DONOR



In 2006 Parker was an active teenager, ambitious academically and involved in a number of sports. It was that year, as a high school sophomore, that a sports injury to his ankle landed him on the doctor's table. Parker had developed osteomyelitis, a staph infection of the bone, in his tibia and fibula. But he couldn't have foreseen that this was the beginning of a trying medical journey that would test the resolve of both him and his family for years to come.

Parker was faced with possible amputation of his leg several times as a result of the

infection. A successive back injury was further complicated due to the existing illness in his bones. He underwent numerous operations to combat the ankle and back afflictions, resulting in a fused ankle and foot, and yet his young body was just beginning its battle to survive.

In 2008, Parker developed pain in his shoulder that he thought was the result of too much weight lifting or lugging a heavy backpack. Doctors performed an MRI and identified a tumor that they presumed to be a result of Parker's previous osteomyelitis. Dr. Ross Wilkins of The

PARKER

RECIPIENT OF: BONE ALLOGRAFT



Denver Clinic for Extremities at Risk told Parker that the tumor required immediate operation. Following the surgery, news got worse.

The tumor was not staph related, but actually osteosarcoma. The bone cancer was Stage 4 when discovered, and had taken hold of Parker's shoulder joint and moved into both lungs. Within a matter of days, Parker had gone from relative recovery from his previous conditions and a normal teenaged life to intense chemotherapy treatments. "It was like whiplash," he said.

So Parker's struggle continued, and he could not have imagined that next the generosity of a tissue donor would lead to the ultimate survival of his arm and his active life.

In order to save his arm, Dr. Wilkins had to remove the cancer-infected shoulder and a large part of his humerus, which he then replaced with an allograft bone transplant from a deceased donor. AlloSource provided the limb-saving allograft. Parker's shoulder was reconstructed with a metal alloy ball joint.

Parker's recovery was daunting. The intense chemotherapy required to kill the cancer was the ultimate test of patience and physical strength. But thanks to a community of support from doctors and friends, and his own determination, Parker has today been cancer free for more than 18 months, and is currently a sophomore at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

With the knowledge that he'll have to be diligent about monitoring his health for the rest of his life, Parker is anxious to seize each day. He is inspired by Boulder's majestic beauty and has taken up rock climbing, much to his mother's chagrin. His interests for the future run the gamut from aeronautics to mechanics.

"I know I have endless possibilities now."