



Shriners

NEWS & NOTES

Shriners Aren't Just Clowning Around

(NAPSA)—Here's a look at hero-clowns and their legacy. When Kevin Trecek, then 17, sustained a spinal cord injury in an accident, it was Shriner clowns Ray Zurfluh and Jim Newcomb who agreed to sponsor his treatment at Shriners Hospital for Children in Chicago.

Zurfluh and Newcomb, who became friends through the Clown Unit of Isis Shrine Temple in Salina, Kansas, drove nearly 2½ hours to Wichita just to help put Kevin on the airplane that would take him to the hospital. While Zurfluh worked as an insurance adjuster and Newcomb as a nurse, the two had plenty of evenings and weekends to be clowns, performing together more than 70 times and logging 10,000 miles to make their engagements.

"These two guys spent all their time together being goofy," said Marcia Lanoue, Hospital Coordinator for Isis Shrine Temple. "They enjoyed everything they did."

After Kevin's successful three-month treatment at Shriners Hospital, he returned home. With incredible support and encouragement from his parents, he started intensive therapy nearby, working over 12 hours a week to recover strength and balance. When he graduated from high school, Kevin was able to walk across the stage to receive his diploma.

Immensely grateful for his son's excellent treatment at Shriners, Kevin's dad David decided to become a member of the Masons, the prerequisite to joining the Shrine fraternity. When he suggested that Kevin and his brother Bret consider joining, the two quickly agreed. In a one-day class, the young men also became Masons, and the three Trecek men found themselves eligible to take the next step toward becoming Shriners.

In November 2000, the Trecek men joined the Shrine; it was the first time anyone could remember



A family of Shriners (from left): David, Kevin and Bret Trecek.

a father and two sons joining Isis Shrine together. In a ceremony in which new members receive their fezzes—the well-recognized tasseled red hats of the Shriners—Zurfluh was there to proudly witness the event.

Newcomb had recently died, but his widow, Gail, wanted Kevin to understand that Jim was there in spirit; she made sure the fez the young man was presented was the same one her husband had worn so proudly. "I knew how much that fez had meant to Jim," said Gail. "I couldn't think of anyone more appropriate to wear it than Kevin."

If a prospective patient ever needs his help, Kevin will be honored to return the favor Zurfluh and Newcomb did for him. "It's a great reward when you can help someone as you've been helped," he said.

For more information on Shriners' network of 22 hospitals that provide free treatment to children with orthopaedic problems, burns and spinal cord injuries, write to: Shriners International Headquarters, Public Relations Dept., 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa FL 33607, or visit the Web site at www.shrinershq.org.

If you know a child Shriners can help, call 1-800-237-5055 in the United States or 1-800-361-7256 in Canada. Shriners Hospitals provide free treatment to children under age 18 without regard to race, religion or relationship to a Shriner.