

## *Children's Hospital—Max C. (Duxbury)*

I have been skiing my entire life and it was all I really loved to do. Only recently, I took up freestyle skiing and it forced me out on the hill at least 5 times a week. They were the greatest days of my life and I will never forget them. Last spring break, I went on a father/son skiing trip to Lake Louise. It was a lot of fun and it was supposed to stay fun.

On April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009, I was in a severe life-threatening ski accident. I was airlifted to the Alberta Children's Hospital by Stars air ambulance and, if it wasn't for them, I would not be speaking to you today. I was suffering from a broken femur, a broken pelvis, and five compression fractures in my lower spine, along with a life-threatening head injury. The head injury required immediate attention because it was life or death situation. Fortunately, after a couple of days, my head injury was stable enough for the titanium nail to be inserted into my broken femur. The surgery went really well except now I have a little twist in my leg. Before my initial surgery, the doctors had to make sure my spinal cord was intact and it was a good sign that I was able to wiggle my toes. This was a big relief considering they didn't know if I was going to be able to move my body from the hips down ever again. At the time I still didn't know what was going on because I was still in a drug induced comatose state. It was five days after my accident before I was fully awake and able to talk. I was on heavy dosages of morphine that made me have terrifying nightmares and stopped me from sleeping at night. After I was stable enough, I had moved on to the trauma unit and from there transferred via ambulance to the Stollary Children's Hospital in Edmonton where I stayed for a week for follow up. I was then transferred to the Glenrose Rehabilitation hospital for the next three months. It was three and half months before I was able to walk without crutches. Luckily I was able to walk on my birthday which was a gift of a lifetime.

My story is one that could have been much worse and I am just one of the fortunate patients from the Alberta Children's Hospital. Recently I was asked to support the Alberta Children's Hospital by telling my story on their annual radiothon fundraiser event. It was a successful event that raised over 1.88 million dollars that will be used to purchase new and improved diagnostic equipment. At the radiothon I had the opportunity to meet other patients with many sorts of medical issues. I had the honour to meet a girl named Teagen, she is 16 years old and she is full of hope. When she was 2 years old she was diagnosed with M.S, several stages of Sarcoma Cancer, and 11 stage 4 tumors in her legs. Teagen is very optimistic and she loves life. Without the Alberta Children's Hospital she wouldn't be alive today. She has lived in hospitals for

fourteen years of her life and she has had more surgeries than birthdays and everyday that she wakes up she knows that she has one more day on earth. It's a painful lifestyle to live like Teagan and it takes a strong mind to be happy with your last days on earth. There are many more kids like Teagan who are living in the Children's Hospitals who aren't as fortunate as all of us and everyone can help with a small donation to Jeans Day. With your small donation, kids our age or even younger can have the same opportunities as we do.

– Thank you very much.