

Chad Francour

Family

Tragedies something that we see on television and read about on the Internet and in the newspaper. We automatically assume it is a lamentable and dreadful event. Never did I think, however, that something tragic would affect my family and surely not me. Every day prior to my accident, I tried to pack as much as I could do in my day: friends, academic achievements, sports, hunting or fishing, etc... Other family members were no different. We had what appeared to be little time for one another. A huge change was to occur and we have been taught the meaning of family.

My family was different compared to many other families in our society. We were all living in a hectic, fast-paced environment, and more often than not the six people in my family were all going in six different directions. Teaching, coaching, student counsel advising, and being president of Marinette Youth Baseball occupied a lot of my parents' time. My mother also bred and showed cats and was very involved with my little sister, who showed horses was involved in dressage. Between the cats and horses, my mom and sister were frequently on the road. When not chauffeuring my sister and myself from activity to activity, my parents were involved in the work similar to other families: cooking, cleaning, and organizing. Besides working with horses, my sister was involved with friendship and sporting activities. My older sister and brother were at college, so our mother was often with Katie and our father was with me. Extended family and friends were frequent visitors. We all had our own things going on and though our paths crossed out of necessity, we really did not communicate. There never seem to

be enough time in the day for all that needed to be done. Our family was incredibly busy. Little did we think about the needs for each other.

In January of 2004, I was involved in a critical snowmobile accident that changed my life. The family dynamics we were so familiar with came to a halt. All efforts were now directed to my recovery, and a hospital became the hub of all activity. Though not all activity is centered around me anymore, my accident did initiate change. Family tragedies are known to pull families apart but ours was different. We came together during the time of need. The family had a focus, which just happened to be me. Where before we have been critical of others, we now became more willing to accept differences. Family members, immediate and extended, had a new outlook on life. The family is closer than we have learned to make adjustments of individual time and energy, even though, my parents still have work and family members are still in the same activities, the focus is different. Some may have new family hobbies and have increased togetherness through better communication.

Before the accident, we all have ridiculously busy lives. With a conscious effort, our family once turned a tragedy into a good thing. We have been humbled by the generosity of others; now we strive to do the same. We have become family in the truest sense of all the saying-one for all, all for one. For that I am grateful, however, there is not a second that goes by I have hoped I never had this traumatic brain injury. I wished that this event would have happened to anyone else in the group that day else besides me.

A person may think that this is a harsh outlook to have on life but I challenge you to talk to someone who has suffered a traumatic brain injury. The condition is NEVER going to leave that person or me. I will always be remembered as, "the kid who got hit by a truck." The

takeaway message or what I hoped individuals will receive from this paper is to count your blessings and cherish everything; good or bad, about life.