

## People Helping People

### Anatomy of A Hero

Update on Drew D'Auteuil's bone marrow transplant and his meeting with the donor.

BY PETER D'AUTEUIL

We arrived last Friday to Germany. Having been in touch with Steven prior to leaving, we planned to meet him and his family on Saturday. The trip was a whirlwind of emotions including meeting Steven, seeing family, traveling to Holland and the news we received right before we left that we were getting a puppy!

But, back to Steven. For over 5 1/2 years, I have wondered about that moment of meeting Drew's lifesaving donor. We have been in regular contact for the last 3 years but meeting face to face? Trust me when I say, you cannot even imagine it. How do you define a hero? The Oxford dictionary defines a hero as "A person, typically a man, who is admired or idealized for courage, outstanding achievements or noble qualities." Greek folklore often described heroes as daring with strong personalities and inhuman strength and abilities. Heroes can also be described as people who influenced change for the better in the course of our history. How do I define a hero? That's easy because we met ours.

In the fall of 2009, about a year after Steven joined the registry, he received a call that he was



Jennifer D'Auteuil authored the book "Anatomy Of A Miracle, Drew's Story". Here she is (left) with son Drew, husband Pete, and Steven Manro with his daughter Elina and wife Kathrin in Germany.

November 18th finally arrived, Drew's transplant took place at 9 pm that evening, complete with Drew pushing the start button. I have to be honest...despite the hope and joy we felt that we were beginning on the journey to reclaim Drew's health and the anticipation following a week of chemo and radiation, the whole transplant was a boring as a regular old IV infusion. That was ok with us but with everything leading up to it, you'd almost have expected fireworks or something. Nope. Just an infusion. Then the waiting game began.

Over the next 2 years, Drew struggled quite a bit, but recovered miraculously from that unexpected complication and time crept slowly by. I remember writing in one of his journal updates about how time was moving so slow for us, but it seemed that we were feeling time speed by for everyone else. After 1 year, we were allowed to write to Drew's donor as long as we didn't put anything identifying in the letter including references to our location, Drew's illness, etc. We learned that his donor was willing to correspond and we were thrilled. As we approached the 2nd year mark, we were contacted again for the donation center and asked if we wanted to exchange contact information with Drew's donor. On March 24th, 2012, we were able to call Steven on the phone and we've kept in touch ever since.

Now, back to present day. Last Saturday, April 25th, we drove to Steven's home which he shares with his wife Kathrin and almost 2 year old daughter Elina. Maybe it was the jetlag or just that 5 1/2 years had passed, but I wasn't as emotional as I thought. Don't get me wrong, I hugged Steven and told him that he saved Drew's life and there were some tears but it wasn't the puddle producing scene that I had imagined and that's ok. We spent Saturday getting to know Steven, Kathrin and Elina. They welcomed us into their home and told us all about themselves. They had traveled to the US on a 5 week tour in December

2010 but that was too soon for us to have been able to connect. They took us over to the castle ruins just a 3 min drive from his house and then hosted a barbeque for us where we met Steven's parents Sonja and Bob and Kathrin's parents Peter and Gita and her brother Kevin. Steven's father is actually from Jacksonville but moved to Germany after he was out of the army.

Everyone was so welcoming and I can't say enough about the food. German food is something else! I connected immediately with Steven's mother Sonja and it was with her at the end of the evening that we both broke down. I just wanted to express to her how much Steven meant to us. He gave Drew a gift that cannot be paid for, measured or be thanked for completely. She's also a mom and can probably relate. Steven's generosity, kindness and compassion were obviously fostered by his parents and for that, I'm extremely grateful to them. As we said our good-byes, we reminded them that they always had a place to stay should they return to the US and we hope to make another trip that could include Kevin and Ryan.

So, how to I define a hero? The young man who saved my son's life. He traveled over 250 km from his home to donate his marrow. He answered that phone call and agreed to the commitment, time and yes, the discomfort. He could have said no. He could have said he didn't have time or that he had changed his mind (unfortunately, this does happen too often for potential bone marrow donors). He didn't. He agreed to save a little boy that he didn't even know. He kept my family whole and gave my son a second chance at a full life.

The origin of the word hero is Greek and the literal translation is "protector" or "defender." A hero doesn't have to wear a red cape or fly faster than a speeding bullet. He doesn't have to have superhuman strength or abilities beyond our imagination. He doesn't have to inspire change, but he did change the course of history for us. Over the years, the definition of hero has fluctuated and been redefined for a certain time period or situation, but the underlying qualities that remain timeless should dictate to whom the title should fall upon. In our case, a giving heart, a generous nature and compassion were all the qualities we needed and Steven possessed. He made a choice that day in November, 2009. He made a choice to make a difference and in doing so, saved Drew's life. A little boy. A little boy who is now a honor student in his sophomore year, participating in school sports, applying for jobs, received his confirmation and earned his driver's license. All of this because of Steven's gift.

That's how I define a hero.



Steven Manro and Drew D'Auteuil

a match for a young boy. At approximately the same time, we were learning that Drew had a match who was ready, willing and able to give his bone marrow to save his life. At that time, our palpable anxiety was reduced somewhat, knowing that there was someone out there who would give to save Drew's life. Learning that neither Kevin nor Ryan was a match for Drew was one of the most heartbreaking parts of Drew's illness. So we focused on the future and Drew's recovery. The days leading up to Drew's transplant were scary, but full of hope for a future. We learned shortly before the transplant that Drew's team of doctors were thinking his donor was from Europe. We knew only that it was a young man. The doctors thought this because on some of the medical reports there was test results for mad cow disease, something that a citizen of the US wouldn't have been tested for unless he/she spent some time in Europe. I remember that Drew found that quite humorous at the time. When

## Local Business Helps Students Compete in College Racing Competition

AMHERST – Joshua Eichel, a 2011 graduate of Souhegan High School is a junior mechanical engineering student at Northeastern University. As such, he is member of the BAJA SAE Racing Team. The team is comprised of study engineers whose disciplines range from engineering to business, to design, fabricate and race a custom off-road vehicle in the BAJA SAE Collegiate Design Series!

When Josh was looking around for a facility to test their car, he looked toward New Hampshire for a solution. Josh explains, "On the Northeastern University team along with me are two other Souhegan graduates, Dalton Colen, 2011 and Beau Landis 2012. Between Dalton, Beau and me, we knew that there would be someone in Amherst willing to help out our team by letting us come up and test from early March right up through our summer competition season!"

According to Josh the team looked at many different sites for testing their vehicle and determined that the Theriault's property would be the perfect location. "When we contacted Dave, he was 100% supportive. He has been supporting us with whatever we needed to test out our car. He opened up his property to us, taking time from his day to help clear trails and remove snow for us to drive around. He allowed us to build up the course, saying



Northeastern University BAJA SAE Racing Team with race vehicle.

anything you need, we can make happen."

The team wants people to know how much Dave Theriault of Theriault and Son's Paving's, did for them. The results speak for them-

After 30-40 hours of testing at the Theriault's, Josh and his team went from a 12th place finish in the Endurance Race of Alabama, to a 6th place finish in the endurance race of Maryland!!

The team credits Dave Theriault with helping the Northeastern University BAJA Racing Team get better and place in the top ten!!



Amherst Country Club

## New Hampshire Wounded Heroes Golf Classic

At the Amherst Country Club, Amherst, NH. Sept. 11, 2015

Our first priority is to raise funds for the benefit of the Semper Fi Fund. This fund provides financial assistance and lifetime support to post 9/11 wounded, critically ill and injured members of all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families.

### DON'T GOLF? THAT'S O.K!

We are organizing now, and we need like-minded volunteers to assist. No special expertise is required, and you can donate as much or as little of your time as you choose.

Some of the areas where volunteers are needed:

- Coordinating with the news media.
  - Contacting other golf courses to publicize our event.
  - Awards coordinator
  - Bookkeeping assistance.
  - Raffle coordinator.
  - Handling registration, scorers, and information table, and other duties on the day of the event.
  - Photographer.
  - Contact person for civic organizations.
  - Working with sponsors.
- If you are a golfer, form a team of your own or register as a single.

There could be many other areas of interest that you have, so contact us and let us know what you would be interested in doing.

THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF NH, PEOPLE OF ALL AGES CAN HELP MAKE THIS A SUCCESS. LET'S SHOW OUR VETERANS WE HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN THEM.

CONTACT US ON OUR WEB SITE FOR INFORMATION ON HOW YOU CAN HELP. WWW.NHWHGC.ALTERVISTA.ORG

### NEW HAMPSHIRE WOUNDED HEROES GOLF CLASSIC

CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO JOIN IN OUR 1<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

September 11, 2015 at the Amherst Country Club



#### Available Sponsorships

Title Package \$2000	Gold Package \$1000	Silver Package \$500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•4 foursomes (16 players)</li> <li>•logo recognition on Web page and event day</li> <li>•Media recognition</li> <li>•Signage and event marketing materials</li> <li>•4 Tee box signs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•2 foursomes (8 players)</li> <li>•logo recognition on Web page and event day</li> <li>•Media</li> <li>•Signage and event marketing materials</li> <li>•2 Tee box signs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•1 foursome (4 players)</li> <li>•logo recognition on Web page and event day</li> <li>•Media</li> <li>•Signage and event marketing materials</li> <li>•1 Tee box signing</li> </ul>

#### Golfers

Individual \$100

Foursome \$400

#### Other Sponsor opportunities:

Food Sponsor \$2800



### NEW HAMPSHIRE WOUNDED HEROES GOLF CLASSIC

CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO JOIN IN OUR 1<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

For the benefit of the Semper Fi Fund

September 11, 2015 at the Amherst Country Club

Time: Registration Opens at 7:30am Shotgun Start 9:00 AM  
 Place: Amherst Country Club 72 Ponemah Road, Amherst, NH 03031  
 Entry Fee: \$ 100 per golfer (includes green fees, cart, lunch, & raffles)  
 Format: 4 person scramble

#### Entry Form

**Team Captain**  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

If you do not enter as a team, we can put you on a team.

#### Team Members: Name & E-MAIL address.

Player 1 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Player 2 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Player 3 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional register forms available at our web site -- [WWW.NHWHGC.ALTERVISTA.ORG](http://WWW.NHWHGC.ALTERVISTA.ORG)

Make checks payable to: NHWHGC Mail to: NHWHGC, Box 2, Amherst, NH 03031

Proceeds will benefit all military branches via Semper Fi Fund

