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HCC student overcomes car accident

By CATHIE VANDERBILT
Reporter

When Billy Fittge was 17 years old he was involved in a car accident. Doctors predicted he had a 10 percent chance of living. Even if he did live, the doctors said he would have extensive brain damage.

That was three years ago. After extensive reconstructive surgery, Fittge is a sophomore computer science major at Houston Community College. He is blind.

His mother, Jessie Munoz, and his stepfather, Manuel Munoz, were retired at the time of the accident. Today, to help cover medical expenses and put their son through school, they run a traveling Mexican dress stand.

"We're from Splendora," Mrs. Munoz said. "We like the idea of traveling from town to town to sell dresses because it allows us to pack-up and go at a moment's notice. We have to go to Houston a lot to take Billy to the doctor. We don't have to check with the boss before we go."

Medical insurance paid for 75 percent of the surgery and Medicaid pays \$200 per month for expenses. Mrs. Munoz said she and her husband send Billy whatever they can to help pay for school and other expenses.

"We've always managed to get by," she said.

The accident occurred when Billy hit a stalled car.

"The driver (of the other car) and four other passengers were all drunk," Mrs. Munoz said. "They stalled on Highway 6 at 10:45 p.m. They had turned off their head-



Jessie Munoz (left) displays a dress.

Photo by CATHIE VANDERBILT

lights and were just sitting inside the car. It was very foggy."

Fittge slammed into the other car from behind and the impact caused all of his facial bones to be crushed.

"It's a miracle the people in the other car weren't hurt," she said. "It's a miracle Billy lived at all."

He was in the Intensive Care Unit at Ben Taub Hospital in Houston for 16 days. After his condition stabilized, neurosurgeons did exploratory surgery to determine the extent of brain damage.

He then went into surgery for 24 hours to reconstruct his entire face. He isn't expected to see again.

Billy will have one more operation in December to reconstruct the bridge of his nose. Mrs. Munoz said after he recovers, she and her husband will move to Louisiana to help care of my mom," she said.

"We want to fish and garden and set up our dress stand to help take care of my mom," she said.

Illegal aliens tracked down for shooting of deputies

United Press International

ANGLETON — Bloodhounds and mounted officers Sunday tracked down three illegal aliens hiding in tall weeds hours after they allegedly shot a deputy in the back, officers said.

Deputy Avery Allen Goble, 25, was also shot in the side after stopping a vehicle with three Hispanic males, said Brazoria County Sgt. Harry Stiles. Goble was in stable condition at Hermann Hospital in Houston.

"Investigating officers decided they should be arrested because of their intoxication. The officer reached inside the patrol unit for an extra set of handcuffs, and his atten-

tion was diverted from the suspects momentarily. At that time, the suspects opened fire," Stiles said.

Goble was wounded three or four times, Stiles said, and Deputy David Wallace, who was with Goble, returned fire, but the suspects were not wounded and fled on foot, Stiles said.

Officers then turned loose search dogs from two nearby state prisons and rounded together officers on horseback. The suspects were found hiding in tall weeds and grass about five miles from the site where Goble was wounded, Stiles said.

Stiles identified the suspects as Rogelio Moreno-Rosas, 26; Santiago Brajas-Madriral, 17; Martin Portales-Duena 18.

United Way starts Brazos area effort

The Brazos County United Way will kick off its eight week campaign tonight with an ice cream social for its volunteers.

The United Way hopes to raise \$425,000 from Brazos County, and to help the community reach that goal, the Texas A&M University System will try to contribute \$110,000 to the effort.

The University System drive is broken down into three parts: the University drive; the System drive, including the Colleges of Agriculture and Engineering and the student body drive.

The University's goal for the campaign is \$55,000; the System goal is \$45,000 and the student body's goal is \$10,000.

The money sought each year by the Brazos County United Way helps fund human service organizations in the community.

The University kicked off its campaign Friday with a breakfast hosted by President Frank E. Vandiver. The System will have a kickoff breakfast Thursday, Sept. 28, to be hosted by Chancellor Arthur G. Hansen.

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