

Going once, going twice ... free?



DAHLIA DENTON/special to THE BATTALION

A mystery philanthropist, donated a free bicycle to anyone walking by on Monday near Harrington Educational Center.

Teen-ager's last wish is thwarted

CAMP HILL, Pa. (AP) — The plans for Nick Breach's death were set for months.

When the 14-year-old brain cancer patient seemed near the end, his parents would call 911.

Local medics would rush him to the hospital. Get him there quickly, and Nick might be able to make good on his promise to donate his heart, lungs, kidneys and liver.

Once the end finally came, just before midnight on Feb. 11, it came so suddenly that even the best-laid plans were not enough. Nick's mother, Kim, then the medics, did CPR for 20 minutes in the living room. They tried again in the ambulance as it raced to the hospital at 70 mph.

They never restarted his heart, and with the blood flow cut off to his vital organs, surgeons could take only his corneas.

Days later, most everyone reached the same conclusion: It was enough that he had tried.

"He got people talking about organ donation and got kids signing up to be organ donors," said his father, Rick.

"OK, it didn't work out completely for Nick. But, God forbid, if it happens to somebody else's child who became an organ donor, it would potentially work out for them."

Nick's offer of his organs didn't surprise anybody who knew him.

"That's the kind of kid he is," teacher Peggy Kunz said last month. "Even now, he's thinking about the other people."

Long before the brain tumor took away his movement, then his speech, then his life, Nick's ordinary generosity was made remarkable by his years of struggle, family, friends and teachers say.

Kunz recently asked eighth-graders at Camp Hill Middle School to write stories about Nick on 3-by-5-inch notecards. She got enough for a scrapbook.

When a teacher gave the kids permission to eat Tic-Tacs in class, the candy-loving Nick brought a 10-pack to school and handed them out. When his grandmother's pizza got cold at a restaurant, Nick jumped up to insist the cook reheat it. When a new kid arrived at school, Nick was the first to introduce himself.

His attempt to donate his organs was just the last, best story. When Nick faced his death, he worried about people left behind.

"When I found out about the second tumor, I wanted to give up hope," he said last month, struggling to piece simple sentences together. "But now I can help other people."

Cancer first hit Nick when he was 5. Radiation zapped the tumor, and he was in remission for eight years.

The bout left Nick learning-disabled with short-term memory failings. Outside class, little things became crises. He'd forget where his class was. He'd lose his lunch. He couldn't find his locker. (One teacher finally tied a ribbon to it.) He'd cry. More than the average teen, he struggled to fit in.

"The thing with Nick, he knew he had this problem," guidance counselor Joe Lazenby said. "This was a kind of lifetime baggage he carried."

Teachers say those travails made Nick special: He seemed to worry about others more than the average 14-year-old. Kunz remembers him asking about her husband, a cancer survivor, too.

Another teacher, Connie Kindler, recalls him reporting that his teacher looked run-down one day.

"When I found out about the second tumor, I wanted to give up hope. But now I can help other people."

— Nick Breach

Hackers manipulate 'broadband'

NEW YORK (AP) — Two weeks after he got a fast Internet connection in his home, Carey Bunks noticed he was not the only one using his computer.

Everything seemed fine with the machine until Bunks, a scientist for BBN Corp., a research company in Cambridge, Mass., checked his computer while reading up on network security.

To his surprise, he found that someone had gained access to the computer via the Internet, and set it up so that it could be controlled from the outside.

"They could have done anything. They could have wiped my disk clean," Bunks said.

Bunks believes one reason he was attacked was his new Internet connection, a digital subscriber line, or DSL. Such lines are spreading fast to homes, along with cable modems, which provide similar speeds.

Already, 2.2 million U.S. homes have such fast, or "broadband," Internet connections, and the number is expected to grow to more than 10 million in two years, according to analyst Lisa Pierce at Giga Information Group.

Experts warn that the fast connections bring security risks. Unlike regular modems, DSLs and cable modems are connected to the Internet as long as the computer is turned on. This gives hackers a larger window of opportunity to access the computer.

"There are people out there, there's no question about it, who go through [the Internet addresses] of cable providers and DSL providers, looking for machines that are connected and seeing if they have any open doors that they can get into," said Milo Medin, chief technical officer of Excite@Home, which provides cable Internet service.

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