

COLORADO BIOSCIENCE COMPANIES IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF OUR LIVES PATIENT PROFILES IN COURAGE

BY: CASEY DEMCHAK

If you follow the Colorado bioscience industry on a daily basis, it can be easy to forget the impact it has on people's lives. News articles and cocktail party discussions often center on an array of buzz phrases such as, venture capital, mergers and acquisitions, job creation, economic impact, breakthrough science and preclinical trials.

These topics are all of great significance, but ultimately there is one subject within the Colorado bioscience community that stands above the rest: the tremendous positive contribution our industry has on lives throughout the world.

People in all corners of the planet wake up every day with a renewed sense of hope because of the work being done right here in Colorado. It's about the woman who can go on a 100-mile bike ride today, thanks in part to a drug that kept her energy and spirits up during her chemotherapy infusion treatments following breast cancer surgery.

It's about a young, innocent boy who can now play video games and look forward to the day when he can eat solid foods—like the other kids—because a medical device made by a Colorado company played an important role in his bone marrow transplantation.

Every day, people we'll never meet are better able to enjoy time with their loved ones, take a walk along a beach or simply use the restroom without pain and discomfort due to the dedication and unending hours of work being done by bioscience professionals throughout our state.

Here are two stories of courageous patients whose quality of life has been raised by Colorado bioscience companies.

WILL CRISLER

In June, 2008 Will Crisler's young life changed in ways he and his parents could never have imagined. A normal nine-year old boy, he had what seemed like a typical nose bleed one day in his home town of Albuquerque, New Mexico. However, when his nose bleed persisted for more than an hour, Will's parents called their family doctor, who advised them to take Will to the

emergency room immediately.

At the hospital it was discovered that his nose bleed was anything but typical. Will also had a low fever, bleeding gums and legs covered in bruises. After an examination and several tests, Will's parents learned their son had severe aplastic anemia – a condition where a patient's bone marrow doesn't produce an adequate amount of blood cells. In fact, upon diagnosis Will's bone marrow was providing a mere 5% of his own cells.



No one in their family had ever been diagnosed with a severe illness, so Will's diagnosis hit them hard. Will soon received his first blood transfusion, and has since received over 130 of them.

Soon after, Will began receiving treatments at The Children's Hospital in Denver. His parents had to take turns staying with him in Colorado, while also staying with Will's 15 year-old sister in Albuquerque. Initially, Will and his family stayed at a hotel close to The Children's Hospital, but the hotel became too expensive and was not clean enough for Will's weak immune system. This obviously wasn't an ideal environment for Will.

However, things changed dramatically for the better when Will was able to move into Brent's Place, which is a five minute drive from Denver's The Children's Hospital. Brent's Place is a non-profit organization providing safe, clean apartments designed to protect patients with immune-compromising conditions. It functions as a convenient "home away from home" for children with cancer and their families, providing immune-compromised patients with an ideal healing environment after bone marrow or stem cell transplantations.

A recent corporate sponsor of Brent's Place is Denver-based CaridianBCT, which is a leading global provider of blood technologies and services to blood centers, hospitals and scientific, clinical and biotech researchers. Because Brent's Place offers housing for children with compromised immune systems, many children benefit from CaridianBCT's technological innovations in the medical device industry.

The medical devices CaridianBCT manufactures in Denver have played a crucial role in Will's treatments. When Will's body stopped responding to traditional treatments, it was determined a bone marrow transplant was the only procedure that could save his life. Fortunately, Will's father, Chuck Crisler, was a matching donor. About six months ago,



Chuck was able to give Will a bone marrow transplant.

Upon harvesting Chuck's stem cells, CaridianBCT's COBE® Spectra Apheresis system was used in the treatment of Chuck's cells prior to transplanting into Will. Chuck's life-saving bone marrow was then given to Will so it could "jumpstart" his system into making its own blood cells again. As a result, Will is now able to produce over 30% of his own cells.

Chuck Crisler is nothing less than amazed with the innovative technology that saved his son. "Thirty years ago, this diagnosis would have likely meant that Will would have died," says Chuck. "I am so grateful for CaridianBCT's technology and how it has kept my son alive."

At CaridianBCT, the focus remains on the patients they ultimately serve, and that's why they are so proud to know that their technology has helped Will through the treatment and recovery of his aplastic anemia. Partnering with Brent's Place in their quest to serve kids with cancer, CaridianBCT is thrilled to be a silver-level sponsor with the organization – furthering their mission For Better Blood and Better Lives. They look forward to supporting

and participating in the Brent's Place annual 5Kwalk/run charity event this summer on July 10th.

To learn more about Brent's Place and how you can contribute to this important cause, we encourage you to visit their website at www.brentsplace.org.

DIANE GROFF

Running 10K's and bike riding across Iowa was considered a normal excursion for Diane Groff who had always lived an extremely active and healthy lifestyle. There was no history of breast cancer in her family, so at age 41 it came as a complete shock to Diane when cancer was detected in her left breast.

Fortunately, it was a Stage 0 diagnosis, and Diane had a lumpectomy and 25 days of radiation treatments. Naturally, she cycled to all of her treatments, completing her final "radiation day" with a 60-mile ride through the Front Range foothills.

Diane's mammograms showed no signs of concern for over two years. However, in the fall of 2001, a second primary bilateral breast cancer was found in her right breast. This time



it was an invasive Stage II diagnosis, and Diane chose to have a bilateral mastectomy and breast reconstruction procedures.

In addition to four surgeries, Diane had to endure 12 weeks of chemotherapy treatments. During this period it was crucial that she maintain her health and keep her energy up as much as possible. To accomplish this, in between chemotherapy treatments Diane would receive an injection of Epogen®, which is a red blood cell booster shot.

Epogen® is a product developed by Amgen, a leading human therapeutics company within Colorado's bioscience industry. Amgen has pioneered the development of novel products based on advances in recombinant DNA molecular biology. As a Fortune 500 company that serves millions of patients, Amgen has always been a science-driven company dedicated to helping people fight serious illness.

What instantly tied Diane and Amgen together is that they are both Longmont, Colorado, residents. "I was able to bike ride to all my Epogen® injection appointments," said Diane. "I would ride straight west, turn left and yell out 'Thank you!' as I bicycled past Amgen."

Diane also noted, "What Epogen® did for me was keep me on my chemotherapy schedule, and that was of huge importance."

Being a 28-year resident of Longmont, Diane had watched Amgen develop over the years, so she felt a special connection to them during her chemotherapy and Epogen® treatments. That connection further solidified three years later when Diane went to a local community function that was attended by Amgen representatives, including Jessica Graziano, who is Amgen's Senior Associate, Corporate Communications.

"I asked Jessica if she had ever met someone who had used an Amgen product," reports Diane. "She said she never had, so I told her my story and that's how my connection with Amgen began."

That chance connection with Jessica Graziano has led to Diane Groff being an inspirational speaker at Amgen training meetings and retreats. In turn, Amgen has funded finish line celebrations for Diane's Rocky Mt. Team Survivor triathlon events.

"It always brings a smile to my face when I see the Amgen sign up at an event," says Diane. "They are also big supporters of the American Cancer Society Relay For Life, and I very much appreciate that."

Only three weeks after her last chemo-



therapy treatment, Diane Groff ran a 5K, a race that she still calls the most significant race of her life. Competing in triathlons and running events as an active cancer survivor is an unending source of joy and hope for her. Diane has been cancer free for five years and continues to lead a very active life. In fact, she is now a sponsored athlete through the Brooks Running Company Inspire Daily program, and a proud member of Team Survivor. To learn more about Diane Groff's amazing journey, please visit her inspiring web site at www.dianegroff.net.

These two profiles show the courage of patients who have benefited from the Colorado bioscience community, but only represent two out of hundreds of thousands of stories across the globe.

It's important for all of us to never forget that beyond the quests for venture capital and scientific breakthroughs lie the hopes and dreams of real people whose quality of life has been forever improved through the hard work and vision of those who have put their heart and soul into shaping the landscape of Colorado's bioscience industry.

A close-up photograph of four hands of different ages and skin tones resting on a dark wooden surface. From left to right: an elderly hand with wrinkled skin, a middle-aged hand, a young adult hand, and a child's hand. The hands are positioned as if they are about to hold something together.

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