



NEWS

Desperate parents seek 'miracle' to save child

Financial aid needed to prolong little Mihdi's life

EXCLUSIVE

By Alex Barclay

BERMUDIAN couple Marvin and Claire Brock have made a desperate plea for financial aid to help to extend the life of their young son.

Mihdi Joon, now 28 months old, suffers from a spinal disorder -- kyphoscoliosis. Scoliosis refers to the S curve of the spine and the kyph is the hump on the back of the right shoulder which his mother says, will ultimately lead to little Mihdi's death.

Specialists at Boston's Children's Hospital have told Mr. and Mrs. Brock that there is nothing that Western medicine can do for their son.

"To leave Mihdi untouched would be to watch his body bend and curl forward like the letter C," his mother told the Bermuda Sun from her home in New Hampshire. "His lungs would be constricted and permanently damaged and he would die a slow and agonizing death by suffocation."

The couple, who left Bermuda four years ago to live in North America, do not even know how long they have left. But they say the deterioration over the past 10 months has been significant.

The only option doctors could give the couple was to perform spinal surgery every six months to screw a rod into the baby's spine to slow the curvature. And if Mihdi were to reach the age of nine, the doctors could then fuse the spine and implant a permanent rod. Though, "he would have probably lost his mind long before. I know I would have from watching him suffer," said Mrs. Brock. "And the surgeon explained that all of this may not even delay the curvature by much and, that he would be breaking his Hippocratic oath of doing no harm, as this scenario would obviously be very harmful to Mihdi."

The couple, now left without the comfort of Western medicine, looked toward Oriental healing to help young Mihdi. Previous to Mihdi's birth Mr. Brock -- the brother of Mansfield Brock and a former local businessman who ran the London Taxies as well as his own insurance brokerage -- was a student of Oriental medicine.

Mrs. Brock said: "Alternative treatments have already begun and will be increased. Marvin will continue to search the globe for other forms of treatment in the event these do not help. We may have to travel with Mihdi to the Orient -- China, Tibet or India on very short notice."

The couple said that insurance will not cover the expenses for their son, as the treatment is outside conventional Western medicine. And following a financial dispute in Bermuda, the family have been left penniless.



"We need cash to assist our efforts to save Mihdi from this horrible prognosis. Any assistance with fundraising efforts and with healing prayers to achieve this would be gratefully appreciated."

Mihdi's entire existence his parents describe as a spirited fight for survival. Mrs. Brock said from the time she was six weeks pregnant she was feeling contractions. But with bed rest and Oriental stress-reducing techniques she was able to carry the baby to term. He was born weighing just five pounds and at that point everything looked normal.

As the months passed the Brocks noticed the Mihdi's head was growing at an increased rate to his body. After intensive testing in a hospital in British Columbia, where they were living at the time, it was discovered that fluid was collecting and there was also a severe narrowing of his aorta.

"Every time Mihdi's heart pumped all the blood pressure went into his head and arms, as it hit the blockage," explained Mrs. Brock. "He could have died from a massive stroke. Surgery was performed and revealed an aorta that was totally blocked. He had survived by growing his own bypass so some blood reached his lower body.

"Mihdi smiled at the doctor from his hospital crib on day three after the surgery and was sent home the next day. What a fighter."

But the infant's heart had become muscular and much larger than normal while he was struggling to pump blood through to his lower extremities. And his chest and midsection were malformed to make room for the organ, his mother explained. The family hoped that time would straighten his crooked body out.

The next concern was excess fluid which had built up on Mihdi's brain. His parents were skeptical about whether or not the baby needed shunts to drain the fluid. It was at that point that the family then moved from their home in British Columbia in Canada to the town of Sunapee in New Hampshire where Mrs. Brock grew up and now closer to Boston's Children's Hospital. Neurosurgeons there decided the condition was benign and needed no treatment.

And according to his parents the little boy remains in good mental spirits. "He is always laughing," his mother said. "I imagine he must live with some discomfort but you would never know it from the way he acts."

It was not until a routine visit to the orthopedic clinic when X-rays revealed the kyphoscoliosis had become much worse.

But despite the odds being against little Mihdi, he has even learned to walk. Balance-wise he is like an inverted triangle, described his mother. "His heavy head sits on the little body. His limbs are slight, but wiry and his will to progress makes him a giant in our eyes."

The boy, at just over two years, has limited speech. But his family communicates with him through attempts at sign language and his expressive face.

Mrs. Brock's eldest daughter Teresa Perozzi is working to set up bank accounts in Mihdi's name. Once the accounts are established the follow up information will be published in the Bermuda Sun.

For further information about Mihdi's condition, Ms. Perozzi can be contacted at 295-6754.