



# The Royal Gazette

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## JOURNEY OF HOPE

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By René Hill

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Can you imagine having to fight for the right to survive each and every day? Can you envisage what it would be like for your spine to curve and infringe on your breathing? And finally can you envision yourself having or administering treatments on a daily basis that are essential to your survival?

The above three questions only begin to sum up the lives of young Mihdi Brock and his father Marvin, who ensures that his treatments are carried out on a daily basis.

Mihdi is now 12-and-a-half-years-old and although he has survived longer than any doctor initially thought, he still requires daily treatments and these treatments require funds, which his father does not have.

So they are appealing for anyone who can assist to help, as they cannot continue without assistance.

A day for Mr. Brock begins at 4 a.m. and it ends with Mihdi's 10 p.m. traction treatment.

A traction bed would allow young Mihdi's spine to be stretched without his father having to lift him by the neck every 15 minutes.

In his own words and in a letter to *The Royal Gazette*, Mr. Brock has shared his very personal journey with his son.

"Good morning,

"I was up washing the dishes just now after falling asleep with Mihdi earlier tonight.

"I reflect on the changes Mihdi has made over the past eight years, which have come up for me since Mihdi began treatment with Dr. Baolin Wu.

"This, mind you, is not to discount in anyway the treatment of the other health care professionals prior to.

"I want to reflect on the fear of losing a child and the feeling of hopelessness and despair at the prospects of my child never being able to talk or walk. When the health care professionals began arranging sign language instruction and we started looking at the likelihood of his needing wheelchairs, because he might have never walked it was almost like this wasn't happening for real, it was a dream.



**In his own words:** Mihdi with his father Marvin Brock who has refused to give up on his son.

"I recall when Mihdi went into B.C. Children's Hospital in British Columbia, Canada, the neurosurgeon wanted to implant shunts in Mihdi's brain and run tubs under his skin for the excess fluid to drain into his abdomen and be absorbed into his body again.

"The research that I did at the time showed that the operation had a high success rate, but the tubs tended to clog around half the time requiring repeat surgeries to address the problem.

"We were in a ward with such a child and I didn't want to see that with Mihdi.

"When I told the doctor that we were not going to proceed with the surgery and why he was very surprised and thought we were neglecting our baby.

"It was while we were there that the blockage in Mihdi's aorta was discovered requiring immediate surgery. We were truly blessed to be in the right place at the right time.

"We were told during that five-day stay that Mihdi had maybe two weeks to live unless he had surgery to remove the blockage. That was successful, but extremely scary for we had no way of knowing if our baby would live or die in that operating room. Later at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, in New England, the team of physicians reported the heart surgery was a complete success and no additional procedure was needed at the time. They also found that the brain surgery was not necessary.

"It was soon after that the progressive spinal curvature was discovered in the then two year old. After that diagnosis we have been on the journey of a lifetime.

"We were once again faced with this little child dying at an early age.

"Doctors at Boston Children's Hospital didn't expect Mihdi to see double digits with his condition and surgery was not an option. It was at that moment when there seemed little hope that I told the doctor that I had seen some amazing feats by the Asian martial artists and as there was nothing that the best medical minds at Harvard could do for little Mihdi I was going to see what the Chinese could do.

"I remember while studying with Master Al Wharton and seeing a demonstration of a Uechi-Ryu master break a baseball bat with his hand and another have a two by four broken over his shin.

"The Chinese acrobats place spears at their throats and bend and break the wooden staffs that are attached to the metal ends. This defies understanding for most of us in the West and was the glimmer of hope for Mihdi in my mind.

"What was to come after that was far from my imagination.

"The little boy who could not walk or talk well beyond when he should have begun is now in gymnastics with Tae Kwondo on hold following the stroke he suffered last October.

"Mihdi talks up a breeze these days, which can be a challenge in five o'clock rush hour traffic in L.A. Dr. Wu said yesterday that he is making up for not being able to talk earlier in life.

"He has a long way yet before he graduates from university, but he is heading in the right direction as he continues to improve in health and education.

"It is amazing to see him beginning to read with the help of the tutoring at Sylvan Learning Center and the Middle School Special Education reading programme he is in.

"Even with all of his amazing progress he can come down with an illness or a bug that sidelines him for weeks at a time. Even there he shows signs of improvement. He usually has caught a cold that keeps him from school at this time of the year, around October or November, not the case this year so far.

"He has a long way to go, but what he says he will 'never, never, never, never ever give up'. It is this mindset and courage along with his discipline and dedication that is allowing for the work of his doctors both Eastern and Western to facilitate the incredible changes he has and continues to make.

This, however, would not be possible without the continuous support of family, the people and businesses of Bermuda and the prayers and support he receives from around the world.

"Recently most Americans gave thanks during the Thanksgiving period and I would like to thank all of the supporters of the Mihdi Joon Fund for helping to save a life.

"At a time when many young people's lives are being cut short as a result of wars and senseless violence on the Island and elsewhere, it is heart-warming and amazing to see the support given to save this little boy's life and so many others in need.

"Over the last 12-year journey, with the help of some of the best minds in Western and Eastern medicine a little boy's life has been saved.

"When I was growing up in Bermuda I didn't hear much, if anything about Eastern or Oriental Medicine. Most people guessed at even the shape of the planet in those days, was it egg shaped or just slightly oval.

"It wasn't until the Apollo missions that we as a people got to see the earth from afar. Our home is more or less round and beautiful. Nonetheless it is home and we all share it together as one people, and it would be arrogant to think there was only one modality of medicine that was effective.

"It is as a result of our experience with Mihdi that I am hoping that there will be the financial support the MJF needed to inform and help people include Oriental medicine in their options for health care for their own benefit.

"It is also a result of our experience that I wouldn't ever want to see any one else faced with the financial challenges we have in pursuing this form of health care.

"If the support can be raised to build the MJF into a foundation to help those who can't afford this option for their children or themselves, I like many other parents can look back at our circumstance and know that we have helped to not only save a little boys life, but share the benefits and financially assist others. That would for me, make the most of our experience and turn lemons into lemonade.

"Sincerely yours,

Marvin Brock, Sr.

**For more information or to donate to the Mihdi Joon Fund, Bermuda Charity #547, PO Box HM 1987, Hamilton, HM HX, or visit [www.themihdijoonfund.org](http://www.themihdijoonfund.org). Bank of Bermuda: 010 500015 011 Butterfield Bank: 20-006-060-777995-100**