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## LIFESTYLE

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### A celebration of life

By René Hill

**Young Mihdi Brock has stepped in front of the camera in a bid to raise cash to finance his medical treatment**

The family of Mihdi Brock has produced a calendar in a bid to raise funds for his continuing treatment.

Mihdi, seven, suffers from curvature of the spine and his treatments cost \$2,000 per month; herbs are \$800 per month and a new torso brace every few months is \$3,000 each time.

At six months old, Mihdi was diagnosed with a rare disorder called progressive kyphoscoliosis, which means his spine is S shaped.

The only alternative to the treatments he would have received in Western medicine would have been continuous operations in a bid to straighten his spine. But his father Marvin Brock traveled the world looking for help, and discovered the White Cloud temple in Beijing, China. Before leaving for China he discovered that one of their top doctors, Baolin Wu, had moved to California to practice acupuncture, massage and herbal treatments.

The family moved to California and began to see Dr. Wu two hours a day, five times a week. Dramatic results became apparent after the treatments.



In the frame: A calendar celebrating the life of Mihdi Brock is going on sale to help pay for his medical treatments.

Mr. Brock brought the little boy home for a visit in September as part of the ongoing Mission for Mihdi. It is an initiative of The Mihdi Joon Fund - the Bermuda registered charity that raises funds for Mihdi's care, treatment, and support in his long-term struggle with the life-threatening condition he suffers from.

Continuing its fundraising efforts, The MJF has just released the 2005 Mihdi Calendar, which is available for purchase throughout the Island at bookstores and pharmacies and other retailers.

"The calendar is a celebration of Mihdi's life in pictures," said Mr. Brock, "And it chronicles the progress he has made over he years.

"Six years ago there was the grave possibility that Mihdi might not live to reach his next birthday.

"Now he is seven-and-a-half-years old thanks to the generous contributions of Bermudians and a grueling daily schedule of daily treatments, physical therapies, and herbal therapies.

"On top of all of this he is going to school and looking forward to continuing his efforts to live and thrive in as close to normal a fashion as will be possible for him."

Mr. Brock said this is an extremely critical time for The Mission though, as unfortunately, as Mihdi has become healthier, the funding has decreased.

"His needs are as great as ever even in the midst of his achievements," said Mr. Brock. "He will continue to need daily treatments and support, as well as financial assistance for another ten to 15 years. There is an immediate need of \$200,000 to cover current and accumulated expenses in order for The Mission to continue.

"Once that is met, the Mihdi Joon Fund will be looking to raise \$500,000 to further its mandate of funding an endowment for the long-term to serve not only Mihdi, but also other people in Bermuda and elsewhere who are in need of Oriental medical treatments, which they cannot afford to pay for."

Mr. Brock said they were also trying to raise \$5,000 to finish a 30-minute video of Mihdi, hopefully to be aired in Bermuda during the first two weeks of November. "We are hoping with the calendars and the fundraising we just did there that it will happen pretty soon," he said, "Then that's it for us for public fundraising until next May." Mr. Brock said they were also hoping to have a fundraising dinner in Bermuda to honour people who have been major contributors, not only to Mihdi, but to other charities. "Those are the big things that we are working on and hopefully we don't have to freak out every other month wondering where the money is coming from," he said. Mr. Brock said daily living expenses make for a tough existence.

"The landlord hasn't kicked us out and we owe her," he said, "It is by the grace of God that we are here and that this continues. "I can't give you any answers. I don't know how. This is how it's been. It is a shame, it is phenomenal, it is fantastic, it is everything at the same time." He and Mihdi's mother are divorced, and he said it was unfortunate that that has happened.

"But I heard that the rate of divorce or break-ups for parents of disabled or challenged children is 100 percent of the national average," he said, "And the national average is 50 percent, so almost all of the parents like myself, wind up divorced. "It is a huge, huge, huge undertaking, but I said hey, I'm 57 years old and I have lived a wonderful life and I have had a lot of opportunities and why not just give the rest of my life to him – that's it.

"Many people don't understand – though most women do – that there is so much to do in a day when you are a full-time father and fundraiser."

"But when you have a household you have all this stuff that has to be done: toilets need to be washed, food needs to be prepared," he said, "And doing stuff like fundraising like I am doing, as I am principal fundraiser, then there is no time for anything. "Mihdi has been out with chest congestion serious enough to lead to pneumonia for the last week. Can you image having a seven-year-old locked up in the house – when you are trying to do everything? "I'm like 'you have got to be ready to go to school'."

On top of everything else Mr. Brock is also studying himself. "I am trying to finish up learning Oriental medicine so I can be in a position to take over most of his treatments," he said. "Mihdi's doctor, who is a higher level of oriental doctor, treats very serious cases like Mihdi and he said it's going to take me another six years to learn what I need to have more time with Mihdi".

"So I have to finish my current programme, which is another 18 months to two years. Then he will teach me beyond that. "Once that is done then I will be able to take Mihdi for longer periods of time. For instance if we wanted to come back to Bermuda, I would be able to do that for more than four or five days. But in terms of being able to care for him totally for the duration and no Dr. Wu, we don't see that. Hopefully he would be old enough to treat himself by that time. "It will give us more flexibility and we won't be marooned here in Southern California. It is not a bad place to be, but after coming home, I miss it. But in order for Mihdi to survive we have to be here. It has been the Orientals who have kept him with us."

The calendar will be in stores from this week, and you can help support the Mission for Mihdi by purchasing it.

Any other contributions can be made to The Mihdi Joon Fund, regardless of size. Please forward contributions to The Mihdi Joon Fund (Bermuda Registered Charity #547), P.O. Box HM 1987, Hamilton, HM HX. More information on Mihdi and The Mihdi Joon Fund can be found on his website at [www.thelotus.com](http://www.thelotus.com).