

LIFE'S A JOURNEY

BY KACHELL MORRIS, 2018 SPINEHOPE U.S. HUB PATIENT FROM THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA, SOUTH AMERICA

Life is a journey full of obstacles that either overtake us or make us stronger.

At first, I thought life was cruel and unfair when my doctor in Guyana (Dr. Hyder Khan) diagnosed me with scoliosis after I visited him complaining of intense pain in my back. He said the only way to cure me was to have major spine surgery. I was depressed because I thought help was not possible since spine surgery is not available in Guyana. So, I chose to shut myself off from the rest of the world. I would sit alone and contemplate the meaning of life. I never told anyone what was on my mind. I always kept it to myself and smiled so everyone would think I was fine and that there was nothing going on with me. Every day someone would make fun of me either at school or somewhere else. At that point, in my life, I felt like less of a person. It made me feel like I did not belong and that life should be over. It felt like a nightmare, a nightmare that repeated over and over again. I was frustrated with my feelings and the negative thoughts overpowering my mind. Even though I was frustrated, I never gave up on my prayers and hope that God would hear my voice and one day smile on me.

Then in 2017, I was told I got accepted into the SpineHope program that would allow me to travel to Austin, Texas for charity spine surgery. Eventually, when I got to Austin, it turned out to be one of the most amazing experiences of my life. I met awesome individuals with great personalities. My caretaker (Miss Dawn), was amazing, generous and her attitude towards me was great. She treated me special. At Dell Children's Medical Center, the staff was courageous, affectionate and diligent. I call them "my angels."

Even though I had pains and thought I couldn't get through it, I kept a positive mindset and said it was for the best. Every night I kept telling myself, "I'm strong, brave and have faith". No matter what I was determined to never give up because I was looking forward to becoming more active in my daily life, like going outside, playing sports and socializing more.

I realize now that I'm strong, faithful and can be whoever I want to be. I know I need to work hard to achieve my goals and now I can without thinking I'm not enough or less of a person. I see a beautiful pathway with sunshine in my eyes and peace in my heart knowing victory is sweet when you have known defeat.



IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 – Life's a Journey
- 2 – A Mother's Wish
Child Sponsor Highlight
- 3 – Life's a Journey Continued
Global Outreach: Ecuador
- 4 – Just a Little Bent
- 5 – Kendra Scott Give's Back Party
- 6 – Walk Tall Austin 2019
- 7 – Walk Tall Austin 2018 Recap
- 8 – About SpineHope
2018 Sponsors

UPCOMING EVENTS

Kendra Scott Give Back Party
November 30, 2018 (6–8 PM)
9595 Six Pines Drive, Suite 960
The Woodlands, TX 77380

SpineHope Surgical Trip–Ecuador
February 23 – March 2, 2019
Hospital de los Valles
Quito, Ecuador

2019 Walk Tall Austin Benefit
April 25, 2019 (6–8 PM)
77 Degrees Rooftop
11500 Rock Rose Ave.
Austin, TX 78758



A MOTHER'S WISH

U.S. HUB PROGRAM

Dear Dra. Dawn Deakin and SpineHope,

I send you a warm and affectionate greeting and I wish with all my heart all kinds of wellness for your life. I'm reaching out to you about my 14-year-old son, Edilzar Samuel López Esteban. In February 2016, he was diagnosed with scoliosis and was told that surgery is the only option to correct his condition.

This is the reason why I come to you, to request your help and support in this difficult situation that I am, as a parent, going through. I'm wishing that through this organization my son can receive the necessary attention for his disease which continues to progress fast. Sadly, in my country, we don't have this type of help and, if someone comes to perform the surgery, it costs a lot of money and money is something that I don't have because I'm a single mom with low income.

Sincerely I can tell you, I don't want to see my son grow with that deformity in his body. As a mother, it hurts me to see him like that. My wish as a mother is to see my son well physically because it really hurts me to see how his back is deforming.

—Marleny Eugenia Esteban Velásquez.



CHILD SPONSOR HIGHLIGHT

Medtronic to sponsor and provide spinal implants for the next SpineHope U.S. Hub patient, Edilzar "Samuel" López Esteban, from Huehuetenango, Guatemala.

Meet Samuel, a 14-year-old boy suffering from severe kyphoscoliosis. After years of pain and discomfort, Samuel will get the opportunity to receive charity spine surgery at Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas with surgeon, Dr. Matthew Geck of Seton Spine and Scoliosis Center. Due to the severity of his case and curve, Samuel will first undergo almost a month of Halo Gravity Traction prior to his surgery in mid-November.

This opportunity is made possible, in large part, due to the generosity of Medtronic's Spine division that has agreed to sponsor Samuel's travel, lodging, food, medication, and medical tests/services prior to surgery. Not only will they provide financial support for this young man, but they will also donate the vital implants and product needed for his 6-8 hour corrective spine surgery. SpineHope appreciates Medtronic's ongoing partnership and their willingness to go above and beyond to help this teen in need.



NEW GLOBAL OUTREACH PROGRAM: ECUADOR

We are excited to launch a new global outreach effort in Ecuador, South America. In collaboration with host spine surgeon, Dr. Hazem Nicola at the Hospital de los Valles, the Hospital de los Valles Foundation, and other local partners including the Fundación El Cielo Para los Niños, we are working together to build a pediatric spine program for Ecuadorian children suffering from spinal deformities and other complex spine conditions. In addition to providing charity spine surgery and post-op care to children whose families do not have the resources to pay for costly treatment, this program will also offer training and education to surgeons, medical staff,

residents and medical students in the region on advanced surgical techniques and spine safety protocols.

Our inaugural surgical trip is scheduled for February 23 – March 2, 2019. Working alongside host surgeons and medical teams at the Hospital de los Valles, eight children will be selected for spine surgery and dozens of children will be examined as part of an all-day clinic. Also during the week, an education event will be arranged for local and regional surgeons, physicians, medical staff, residents and students. To assist with this effort, SpineHope will bring a volunteer team comprised of surgeons, implant representatives, neuromonitoring techs, anesthesiologists, nurses, translators and on-site coordinators, as well as donated spinal implants and other product, neuromonitoring equipment, and supplies for the children.

We look forward to this new chapter and are excited about collaborating to build a sustainable spine program in Ecuador.



Continued from page 1

"The future seems bright, full of success and happiness. It glows with faith, and hope, peace."

I'm grateful for this once in a lifetime opportunity given to me by generous, kind and amazing individuals and organizations including: The Caribbean Children Foundation (my Sponsor); Dell Children's Medical Center/ Ascension nurses, doctors and staff (my angels); surgeons Dr. Matthew Geck and team at Seton Spine and Scoliosis Center AND Dr. Ryan Murdock and team at Central Texas Pediatric Orthopedics; Dr. Michael Josephs and staff at Austin Pediatric Surgery; Dr. Royce Hayes, Dr. Genevieve Mounce, Dr. Nicholas Lee, Dr. Jon Filardi and team at US Anesthesia Partners; Dr. Timothy George at Dell Children's Medical Center; Dr. Virginia Harrod at Dell Children's Medical Center; Mr. Brandon Black and Medtronic Spine USA (my implant donors); Mr. Wynn Gordy and NuVasive, Inc. (neuromonitoring donor); Dr. Elena Ruiz and Bee Caves Pediatrics; Dr. Robin Whitehall and team at Children's Neurology Consultants of Austin; Dr. Leslie McQuiston and team at Children's Urology; Mr. Tom Engwall and Alliance Spine; Ms. Jessy Faulkner and team at Azarmehr Law Group (ALG Immigration Law Firm), Ronald McDonald House Charities; ARA Diagnostic Imaging; and SpineHope.





JUST A LITTLE BENT A VOLUNTEER STORY

ARTICLE BY JULES WILLIAMS, OWNER AT IRON SOUL TRAINING IN AUSTIN, TEXAS AND SPINEHOPE VOLUNTEER

I am so excited to be able to volunteer and help the amazing organization, SpineHope. I have overcome three back surgeries and I know firsthand how life-changing they can be.

I had my first surgery at the age of 15 when I was a junior in high school. I had been excelling at playing sports and the thought of having to get surgery and not be able to play was devastating to my self-esteem.

Unfortunately, I didn't have an organization like Spine Hope to keep me encouraged, so I fell into a deep depression that lasted for years. During that time, I convinced myself that I was broken and not able to exercise and move like I used to. I also had people feeling very sorry for me all the time, which only further fed my belief that I was helpless. I started hanging out with the "bad" kids in school. The ones who drink and smoke and do all those rebel things. I was so convinced that I was worthless because of my surgery that I didn't care about my future.

Fast forward about 10 years, I was 25 years old, and had figured out I wanted to do something with my life. I graduated from college and landed my first real job as an event coordinator. Once again, I started experiencing intense back pain but assumed it was just because of the surgery I had years earlier. Little did I know that my life was about to be turned upside down, again.

"I was meant to go through multiple back surgeries to be the person I am today."

I went to a doctor for my pain, and he took an x-ray of my back. He explained to me that the rod holding my spine straight had broken some years earlier and that my spine was back to its original 52-degree curve.

I would need another surgery to fix my spine. I was in shock. The recovery process for this surgery is not easy. But at least I knew what I was in for since I had experienced it before. I got the surgery, endured wearing my back brace during 3 months of Texas summer heat and learned how to walk again. But I was still not taking care of my physical health. I wasn't exercising or eating right, and I was smoking a pack of cigarettes a day! I was now 100% convinced that I was broken. I mean, I had two back surgeries under my belt. Surely, I was broken.

But I soon met a man who would change my life...One day after work, a co-worker asked me to attend a local boot camp class with her. I told her I would go with her, but that I wouldn't be able to work out. She seemed relieved just to have someone go with her. When I was standing in the back of the room, not participating in the workout, the instructor came over to me. He looked me up and down and said, "Why aren't you doing any of these moves?" I told him about my back surgeries and that I was too messed up to exercise. He didn't accept that.

He pushed me to at least try the movements and take it slow. So I did, and I still can't thank him enough for that push of encouragement. He saw something in me that I couldn't see in myself. I started attending his boot camp classes once a week, then twice a week, slowly that moved up to 5 days a week. I was outperforming everyone in the class. I wasn't as broken as I thought!

That was the catalyst to a whole new perspective on life for me. I was no longer bound to my self-destructive thoughts that I was unable to do certain things. If I listened to what my body was telling me, I could move just as well as anyone with a normal spine. I advanced from boot camp classes to join a Crossfit gym. I was getting so strong! From Crossfit, I advanced to bodybuilding. I was now in the best shape of my life!

Then I started experiencing back pain.... again. Now it was more of a sciatica pain that was a bit unbearable. I went to the doctor and found out I would need yet another surgery. So, there I was, in the best shape of my life, faced with another debilitating surgery. But this time, I kept my spirit positive and hopes high. Having been through 2 of these surgeries, I was now a pro at bouncing back. It wasn't easy, but a few months after that last surgery, I was back in the gym determined to get my strength back. I had learned so much about myself and my inner strength that I knew this surgery would not hold me down.

A few months after that surgery, I started my own personal training business. I figured if I could bounce back from 3 back surgeries and come out the other side stronger than before, I could help others achieve their fitness goals too. I am now in my 2nd year of business with Iron Soul Training and couldn't be happier with the way my life turned out. I believe everything happens for a reason, a greater purpose.

I was meant to go through multiple back surgeries to be the person I am today.

Now I am excited to help the children of SpineHope realize that they too are meant for greatness. We are not broken, just a little bent!



KENDRA SCOTT



KENDRA GIVES BACK PARTY!
Enjoy sips, sweets and jewels while shopping to support SpineHope!

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30
6-8 p.m.

KENDRA SCOTT
Market Street | 9595 Six Pines Drive,
Ste. 960, The Woodlands, TX 77380

Unable to attend?
You can still contribute! Place a phone order during the event and we will ship your order to you at no additional cost.
281.528.1174

"The Caribbean Children Foundation, Dell Children's Medical Center and SpineHope will always be in my memory for as long as I live. My daughter's new lease on life was because of all the amazing, kind-hearted people who donated what was needed to make everything possible like a true fairytale in every sense. Dr. Geck and team, a special thanks to your amazing work and donation to us. We will always remember you Ms. Dawn and Alistair. We cannot stop thanking you for always being there for us and putting us first."

- Fay Smartt Scott, Mother of Samathra Scott (2018 SpineHope Patient from Guyana)

If you would like to help us raise funds to bring children like Samathra to the United States for charity spine surgery, you can make a charitable donation or please consider being a sponsor and/or attending our 2019 WALK TALL Austin Benefit (details below).



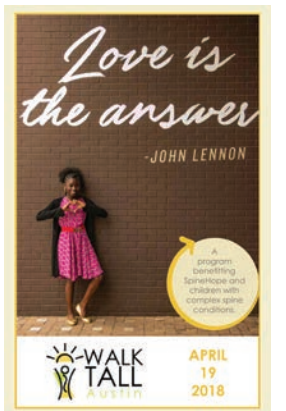
APRIL 19, 2018

Thank you to all who sponsored and attended the 2018 WALK TALL Austin Benefit Reception in April. We had an outstanding turnout! Not only were we able to raise the funds necessary to bring three children to Austin, Texas for spine surgery, but we also raised additional funds that will go towards sponsoring a child in 2019! We appreciate and celebrate all who contributed and helped us achieve our goal, including individuals and organizations who made additional donations to sponsor a child: Dr. Mark Gunn, Ms. Melissa Hamilton, Mr. Mike Levy, Ms. Christine Murdock, Dr. Philip Sanger AND The Caribbean Children Foundation, K2M, Medtronic, ImplantBase, NuVasive, SentryNeuro, Alliance Spine, DePuy Synthes and US Anesthesia Partners.

We would like to thank our guest speaker, Mr. Tony DeDominico from Dell Children's Medical Center; our event volunteers; Arica Hilton, Circuit of the Americas, Erica Wildman and Kendra Scott for donating raffle/silent auction items; and Massage Sway for donating massage services for the evening!

2018 event volunteers:

- Amanda Beck
- Kathy Cantilo
- Alistair Deakin
- Jaclyn Felts
- Natalie Grogono
- Melissa Hamilton
- Carmela Pinzone
- Colleen Turner
- Danielle Vernon
- Keely Williams








Annual SpineHope Benefit Reception

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2019
6-8 PM
77 DEGREES
 11500 Rock Rose Ave, Austin TX 78758

COCKTAIL RECEPTION • RAFFLE
 SILENT AUCTION • STORIES OF HOPE
 OPPORTUNITY TO SPONSOR A CHILD



Join us for an evening devoted to raising funds to bring children from around the world to Austin, Texas in 2019 for corrective spine surgery at Dell Children's Medical Center. Help us continue to transform the lives of children suffering from debilitating spinal deformities who lack the financial resources and access to qualified medical facilities in their countries. Come hear real stories of lives changed and learn how you can help a child in need.

Purchase tickets and sponsorships in advance at spinehope.org/events
 Tickets: \$40 per person
 At door: \$50 per person

VOLUNTEER OR DONATE TODAY

Our mission and operations are driven by dedicated volunteers and the generous donations we receive. We need your support to help us correct spinal deformities, alleviate pain, prevent paralysis when possible, and improve the quality of life for underprivileged children around the world.

If you or someone you know would like to help, please contact us at: spineoutreach@gmail.com

Tax-deductible donations can be made securely on our website or by mailing a check to:

SpineHope
 P.O. Box 684261
 Austin, TX 78768

www.SpineHope.org | (682) 463-9082

We are grateful for your support!



Follow us on social media: @SpineHope

ABOUT SPINEHOPE

SpineHope is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that is dedicated to providing advanced medical treatment to impoverished children around the world. We assemble volunteer teams of medical professionals to address pediatric spinal deformities and other complex spine conditions. SpineHope offers both direct services to patients as well as education and support to surgeons, physicians and medical staff worldwide.

Our Programs

GLOBAL OUTREACH PROGRAMS: We work collaboratively with hospitals, organizations, and corporations abroad to establish sites for medical mission trips. During missions, volunteer surgeons operate on 8-15 children and see 20+ children in the clinic.

U.S. HUB PROGRAM: We have partnered with several healthcare organizations in Austin to bring children with severe spinal conditions to Austin, Texas for surgery and treatment. Children come for 4-6 weeks for surgery and recovery.

EDUCATION PROGRAM: In our global outreach sites and during our medical mission trips, our volunteer surgeons conduct training with local surgeons and hold educational conferences to provide hospital staff education on advanced techniques and safety protocols.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MATTHEW GECK, M.D.

Co-Founder/Board Chairman/Co-Medical Director
Co-Chief at Seton Spine and Scoliosis Center

HAL KATZ, J.D.

Legal Counsel
Partner at Husch Blackwell, LLP

ETHAN S. LAUER, CNIM

Co-Founder
CEO of ImplantBase

RYAN MURDOCK, M.D.

Co-Medical Director
*Pediatric Orthopedic Surgeon at
Central Texas Pediatric Orthopedics*

JASON YORK, MBA

Treasurer
*CEO/Administrator of Orthopedic
Associates of Central Texas P.A.*

THANK YOU

TO OUR GENEROUS 2018 SPONSORS

PREMIER

Medtronic

Further, Together

PLATINUM



GOLD



CHILD SPONSORS



Medtronic

Further, Together



www.SpineHope.org
(682) 463-9082



@SpineHope