

- **R.J. Lowdog: A true inspiration**
- **Caleb Baker steals the show**
- **Holiday Sharing helps children**

INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE:

**McHenry Awards** 3

**Applications being accepted** 3

**Caleb Baker** 4

**Message from the Board** 6

# Working Together for the Children

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## R.J. Lowdog: Wrestling for a Great Future

Nine year old Robert (R.J.) Lowdog was born with amniotic band syndrome, a rare condition in which strands of the womb's amniotic sack tear loose and wrap around limbs or other parts of the growing fetus. His parents, Kaycee and Brandon Neal of Billings, Montana said after his birth that R.J. spent 50 days in the neonatal intensive care unit in the Shriners Hospitals for Children® - Spokane. His legs ended in stumps several inches below each knee.

As an infant, surgeons at the Shriners Hospital in

Spokane removed small pieces at the tips of his legs. He spent three months in a full body cast to repair a detached hip before his first birthday.

His mother said, "That did



not slow him down. When he was small, he would pull himself all the way up the stairs, onto a chair, couch or bed."

R.J. got his first artificial legs around the time of his first birthday and at 18 months he started walking with a walker.

Kaycee said, "He would crawl and then he would stand on his prosthesis for a couple of seconds and he would fall right over. He was learning his balance and developing muscles."

R.J. underwent surgeries un-

*(Continued on page 2)*

## The Holidays are a time for SHARING

There is still time to get your holiday sharing donations in to the Daughters of the Nile Foundation. This special program is a wonderful way to help the children who need our assistance and claim a year-end tax deduction. Contributions to the Holiday Sharing program go to the Convalescent Relief Account.

There are several ways to make your holiday dona-

tion. Contact your Subordinate Temple Charitable Giving Chairman to find out about your Temple's holiday sharing program, send a check directly to

the Daughters of the Nile Foundation at 6705 Mesa Drive, Austin, TX 78731, or go to the Foundation website at [www.donfdn.org](http://www.donfdn.org), click on the online Gift Store and look for the Donate category.

As we gather with friends and family this holiday season, we can be grateful that we have a hand in helping so many children lead fuller and richer lives. Their smiles mean so very much!



*R.J. Lowdog Continued from Page 1*

“R.J. wears prosthetic legs embellished with a vivid design of bright shooting flames”

til he was seven years old, including ones to keep him fitted in his prosthetics. The family said Shriners was a God-send for them. They did not have funds needed for R.J.’s care and Shriners took care of that. They were even able to stay free of charge in the family rooms at the hospital. When these rooms for parents were made available in Spokane, Sapphira Temple No. 79 in Helena, Montana took over the supplying of two of the family rooms with linens, dishes, lamps, etc. and they continue to provide these items each year.

R.J.’s step-father Brandon Neal, a former high school wrestler, kept after his wife to let R.J. try wrestling. Kaycee couldn’t imagine how he could compete. The coach said, “Becoming a good wrestler takes a tough mom. Your mom’s got to be supportive of all those bumps,

black eyes and fat lips that will come with grappling.” “When R.J. first started wrestling before he turned five, he would sit on the mat and cry because he didn’t want to do it,” Kaycee said. By the time he went to his

first tournaments, he was hooked. His mom was protective “like a mama bear.”

Now R.J. couples a muscular, 60-pound body with a never-say-die attitude. His closely cropped black hair switches at the base of his skull into a long, thin braid.

Whenever he wrestles, R.J. opens people’s eyes to what determination makes possible. Wrestling has helped R.J. learn how much he can overcome. In school, at Big Sky Elementary,

R.J. wears prosthetic legs embellished with a vivid design of bright shooting flames. He takes his legs off at wrestling. The other wrestlers pay no attention when he leans the artificial legs against a mat. During conditioning sessions, he runs laps around the mat on his knees or moves like a bear on all fours. Sometimes he ends a grueling two-hour practice with a few handstands on the mat just for fun.

Once during a tournament, a referee called a brief timeout when R.J. injured his back. “He came out of it and they kept wrestling, and he took first place,” Kaycee said.

In July 2012, R.J. was the Shrine Poster Child at the East-West Shrine Football Game in Great Falls, Montana.



## Nominations being accepted for McHenry Awards

Would you like to recognize a member of your Temple who works tirelessly, helping to raise money for Convalescent Endowment Fund or Convalescent Relief Account? There are so many of our members who give generously, who organize fundraising events and who promote the Daughters of the Nile Foundation. Through a generous gift by John and Nadine McHenry and the law partners of McHenry Haszard Law in Lincoln, Nebraska, the Foundation is able to recognize these giving and caring individuals. The McHenry Awards are meant to recognize those who work behind the scenes and give

from the heart to support our mission of helping children. Criteria used in selecting recipients of the award are located on the Daughters of the Nile Foundation website at [www.donfdn.org/award](http://www.donfdn.org/award).

Nominations are now being ac-



cepted for deserving individuals. To submit a nomination, simply write a paragraph or two on why you feel the member should be recognized. Look around your Temple for those hard-working and dedicated individuals. Submit your nomination to Linda Trible, 10323 Eastgate Dr. North, Mount Vernon, IN 47620 or [ltrible@donfdn.org](mailto:ltrible@donfdn.org). Recipients will be recognized at Supreme Session in June and given a beautiful pin designed especially for these awards. The deadline for submitting nominations is February 1.

## Submit your application for the Foundation Board of Directors

The members of the Foundation Board of Directors are responsible for overseeing the philanthropic endeavors of our Order. They work diligently, protecting and growing the Convalescent Endowment Fund, spreading the news of our philanthropy and doing all they can to allow us, as Daughters of the Nile, to continue helping children for many years to come.

Individuals are elected to the Foundation Board of Directors based on information provided on a personal application. The application form is found online at [www.donfdn.org/Board](http://www.donfdn.org/Board). Qualifications required to serve on the board include:

- A firm commitment to our philanthropy and mission;
- Knowledge and skill for governance of the Foundation;
- Knowledge of financial matters to assist the Board in carrying out its fiduciary responsibilities;
- Excellent written, verbal and organizational skills;
- Strong leadership skills;
- Ability to serve on and chair one or more committees;
- Willingness to make a time commitment to conduct Foundation business.

Applicants with experience in managing a non-profit organization, marketing, public relations and donor development are highly sought. Consideration is also given to the geographic area where the candidate lives.

Applications for positions on the Board are being accepted through December 31, 2012. Questions about the Board may be addressed to any Foundation Board member or through the Foundation website. Send email requests for information to [contact@donfdn.org](mailto:contact@donfdn.org).



# Caleb: The Star of the Show!

This story begins about seven years ago in East Helena, Montana where Joshua and Mary Baker were enjoying their life together with their beautiful daughters Rebecca and Lyndsey. The family was just getting fiscally settled, when Mary discovered she was pregnant.

At this same time, Joshua had recently left his job for a better career and had high hopes as he started with a new company in the area. Then this company lost their contract and 180 employees including Joshua were laid off. It was three months before Joshua found another job.

Joshua tried to be happy, but because of the recent employment situation, he felt the journey in front of his family could be long and difficult. They pressed forward preparing for the birth of their child. Joshua said, "God does like to laugh and with every hardship is a blessing in disguise."

At Mary's first ultra sound, they were surprised and thrilled to be told a son would join their family! "It was like a ray of light shining down on us and it was easier to look forward to our son's birth," Joshua said. He would be their first son and Joshua's parents' first grandson.

The journey had just begun, because the pregnancy was very high risk. Mary is a small woman and her last two pregnancies had taken quite a toll on her body. Doctors monitored her and the baby very closely for the next few months. Then it happened, the baby was almost at term when he started to lose weight. They knew the baby needed to come into the world sooner rather than later, even if it was a little premature. On February 7, 2006 at

11:20 a.m., Caleb Eugene Baker was born at the great weight of five pounds, six ounces and approximately eighteen inches long.

To the family's surprise, Caleb's feet had a unique characteristic in that they were turned in with the left foot being worse than the right. Also, his left leg was significantly shorter than the other. The nurses tried to assure Mary and Joshua that everything was all right but they both knew it wasn't as Caleb was rushed out of the room without letting Mary even hold him.



Joshua went to the Neonatal Unit with Caleb and watched as hospital personnel ran a gamut of tests. He had never been that scared in his life. After about an hour, Joshua got to touch his son and it was amazing, and soon after Mary did as well. Joshua said, "Caleb had a way of just melting in your arms and his face was a ray of light that simply brought bliss to your heart." For the next 24 hours, one of the parents was always with Caleb. Soon Mary was discharged, but sadly Caleb remained in the hospital. They said leaving Caleb was one of the hardest things they had ever done. Then they agreed one of them would always remain in the unit with Caleb

until he gained enough weight to be released to their care. The day finally came and he was released to his parents care. Their family was complete once again.

First, the family saw their local doctor who directed them to a foot doctor in Missoula, Montana and to the Shrine. They saw the foot doctor immediately who had never seen a case like Caleb's and immediately made the assumption their child would never walk normally and certainly would never run. They were discouraged, but left open the hope Shriners would be able to help them.

Upon returning home, they met with a Shriner and their Shrine sponsor. They explained they knew many children that had been helped at the Shrine Hospital for Children® – Spokane and were confident Caleb would too. The family accepted the Shrine offer and journeyed to Spokane where a Physician's Assistant examined Caleb and seemed shocked by what she saw and was amazed by his condition. The family was a bit discouraged until the doctor came in, looked Caleb over, smiled kindly and said, "Caleb would not only walk, but run and no one would ever stop him." Their hearts leapt right out of their chests for joy!

The doctor explained the road would not be easy. Casting would be done every week to bend his foot a little more and then it would be cast in place. The next step would be surgery to cut his Achilles tendon to release his foot some more. That

*(Continued on page 5)*

*‘Their son was touched by the hand of God and it is because of that, they know he will always be OK wherever he goes and no matter what trials are ahead of him.’*

*CALEB* (Continued from page 4)

process would be followed with more castings for the remainder of the year. Caleb would also have to wear the Dennis Brown Bar 24 hours a day for several months. Then it would be worn only at bedtime for a couple of years. He would also wear a lift and eventually that difference would get to be so great that they would have to do leg lengthening or shortening surgery or both when he became a teenager. This problem is called Fibular Hemimelia. None of this information fazed the family because they knew their son would walk and that would get them through the next months.

One of Joshua’s most favorable memories at the hospital was when Caleb was in surgery to release his foot. He and Mary were waiting, when at the end of the hall they saw an absolutely beautiful little girl playing with her mother. They were intrigued because they noticed this little girl could not walk and they wanted to hear her story. The mother told them they were from Canada and her daughter was born with Spinal Bifida. The condition was discovered when their healthcare system did routine amniocenteses to check on the condition of the child when they no-

ticed her daughter had hole in her spine. The Canadian government implored her to abort the baby, but she refused citing it as being against her religion. And with that, the government wrote this little girl off and refused to give her any medical care at all. The Mom searched for help and found Shriners Hospital for Children® – Spokane. They got her daughter all the medical assistance she needed and even a wheelchair to get around in.

It was seeing this little angel of God that made Joshua realize that if this child could find happiness, his family could too. His whole family made sacrifices to help fund what was happening to them financially, even getting second jobs. Their families and church helped them keep their home until they got ahead of it all. These two families believed in Shriners and that God would take care of them and He did.

Now that Caleb is six, Joshua said he is like any other boy his age, but unlike other boys, he still radiates a certain contagious happiness that is impossible to escape. His teachers and friends have commented on this several times. He and Mary smile because they know where he gets it. Their son was touched by the hand of

God and it is because of that, they know he will always be OK wherever he goes and no matter what trials are ahead of him. The Shriners have shared a lot of love with them, and their doctor is a true miracle worker. They have given the Bakers hope. Hope to be normal. Hope to be happy. And hope to someday to be able to return the gift back to another needy family, and once again start the circle of love that began with them so many years ago when their son was born and their Shrine journey began.

Recently, the Baker family members were guests at the Sapphira Temple No. 79, Daughters of the Nile Style Show in Helena. Joshua’s face is still a ray of light, and he is a handsome boy who stole the hearts of all in attendance when he ran down the style show runway several times!



**Thank you for supporting the Foundation’s Holiday Card Project!!**

## Where do I send my contributions??

The Daughters of the Nile Foundation accepts donations from members of our great Order, from friends of the Foundation and from the public at large. All contributions are appreciated as they help us grow our Endowment Fund, which in turn allows us to increase our donations to Shriners Hospitals for Children®.

Members of Daughters of the Nile have many options for making their contributions to either the Convalescent Endowment Fund or the Convalescent Relief Account. Many choose to contribute solely

through Subordinate Temple projects and their Princess Recorder. Others opt to donate directly to the Foundation. By doing so, the donor receives a Foundation receipt.

Donations directly to the Foundation, including orders from the My Gift Incentive program, Stepping Stones to Happiness certificates, Holiday Sharing Program, and Temple contributions should be sent to:

**Daughters of the Nile Foundation**  
**c/o Herbie Kay Lundquist**  
**6705 Mesa Drive**  
**Austin, TX 78731**

The Daughters of the Nile Foundation also uses a direct mail company to provide information and ask for donations from members AND the public. The address you will see for these contributions is:

**Daughters of the Nile Foundation**  
**P.O. Box 9506**  
**Wilton, NH 03086-9506**

Donations are also accepted through our secure online Gift Store. Regardless of how you choose to participate, contributions are 'credited' to the Subordinate Temple and help us help children.

## From the Board of Directors

Greetings to all from the Foundation Board of Directors!

It is our mission to help children and we are so grateful for the opportunity to do so. We are doubly blessed; we are so fortunate to be members of a wonderful organization that promotes peace and harmony among its members AND we have the added bonus of knowing we make a difference in children's lives.

A visit to any of the 22 Shriners Hospitals for Chil-



dren® facilities will confirm the reason we work so hard at Temple fundraisers, the reason we proudly wear pins and display items from the My Gift

Incentive program, why we donate as much as we can.

These special children and their parents are so grateful and happy to be receiving the best of medical care for orthopedic problems, spinal cord injuries, severe burns and cleft lip and palate. Children from across North America will celebrate happier holidays because of the work we do. THANK YOU!