

GIFT OF LIFE INSPIRES 10-YEAR-OLD TO ADVOCATE FOR DONATION



Last November, Averey Anderson, Brent Hubley's 10-year-old niece, presented Gift of Hope with a check for \$200, which she raised herself by making and selling woven bracelets in honor of her uncle. Between sales at school and on Facebook, Averey has raised upwards of \$500 for the organization.

Averey Anderson was only two years old when her Uncle Brent Hubley suffered life-threatening injuries in a motorcycle accident in 2010. But speaking with her you would think she knew him her entire life. Although she was too young at the time of his death to understand the significance and importance of her uncle becoming an organ and tissue donor, today the 10-year-old is an avid and active advocate for donation. The dedicated and remarkable fifth-grader raises funds for Gift of Hope, educates students at her school about organ and tissue donation and organizes special events to honor and keep her Uncle Brent's memory and legacy alive.

Brent was 21 when he was in a motorcycle accident. He was taken to Rockford Memorial Hospital (now Javon Bea Hospital – Rockton) in Rockford, Ill., and, after scans showed he had no brain activity, Gift of Hope informed his family that he was a registered organ and tissue donor. The news was a surprise to the family, who had never discussed his donation status with Brent.

"If that's what he wants then we'll honor it; he was a very caring person," said Jan Hubley, Brent's mother. "He would do anything to help. That's what he wanted. He would do it. Definitely do it."

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST

Brent's mother and sisters, Staci Hubley-Taylor and Heather Hubley-Thorson, said he was a regular jokester. He was always pulling fun little pranks on the holidays and making situations feel sillier. "He always said live life to its fullest because you never know when your last day is going to be," Jan said. But he also knew how to "turn it off," said Heather, and he would always be there for you if you were struggling or having a hard time.

Not one to be stuck inside, Brent could usually be found outdoors camping, swimming or playing basketball. He was also a repository of sports statistics. He called his grandpa to

talk sports every day and kept up with every sports league imaginable.

Brent also had a plan and had a bright future ahead of him. While in high school, he started his own landscaping business equipped with only a truck and a lawn mower. The business grew so successfully that Brent's dad, Mike, quit his job and joined him in his business venture. The company exists today as M&B Landcare (Mike and Brent) and is still run by Brent's family.

HONORING UNCLE BRENT

As Averey has grown older, she has started to gain a better understanding of her Uncle Brent's gifts all those years ago. When one of her friends learned how to make woven bracelets at a Navajo nation reservation, Averey got inspired. She asked her friend to teach her how to make the bracelets, and, after getting permission from her teacher, she started selling them at school to raise funds for Gift of Hope in honor of her Uncle Brent. Between sales at school and on Facebook, Averey has raised upwards of \$500 for the organization.

But, more importantly, Averey's efforts have helped educate her peers about organ and tissue donation. When one of her classmates shared negative misconceptions about donation, Averey obtained educational material from Gift of Hope and used the situation as a jumping-off point to talk about the many myths associated with organ and tissue donation. The classmate later thanked Averey and told her she shared the information Averey provided with her mom and found out her mother was mistaken in the beliefs she held. Averey's commitment to donation and her efforts are having a real impact on the lives of young people.



Brent Hubley was 21 when he passed away and became an organ and tissue donor. He saved four lives through the gifts of his liver, kidneys, pancreas and heart, and many other lives were saved and enhanced through his tissue gifts.

But Averey isn't just making and selling bracelets to honor her uncle. Last year, she organized a memorial walk on Brent's 30th birthday. About 50 people showed up to walk a loop around Willowbrook Cemetery in Roscoe, Ill., where Brent is buried. After the walk, they had drinks and lunch with participants at Roscoe's Whiffletree Tavern, which Averey describes as Brent's favorite "watering hole." Proceeds from the memorial walk's T-shirt sales went to the Brent Hubley Memorial Fund.

TRANSPLANT RECIPIENT AND DONOR

Brent became a tissue recipient himself when he was only 10 years old — Averey's age today. By becoming an organ and tissue donor, he saved four lives through the gifts of his liver, both kidneys, pancreas and heart. He has also saved and enhanced the lives of 89 individuals to date through his tissue gifts of skin, tendons and bone grafts. People in 21 states have received his tissue gifts.

For Brent's family members, who were devastated by his loss but honored his decision to help others, it's like he's still here in some way. "He's not physically here," said his sister Staci. "But we know he's spiritually here. He's still around."