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Pullen For Marshall

JUNE 13TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

Pullen For Marshall

Sikeston, Missouri - You may not know little Marshall Pullen, but he will warm your heart. Marshall is a four-year-old little boy and has been diagnosed with a rare brain tumor last. He is the son of Stephanie and Derrick Pullen. Stephanie graduated from Charleston High School, home of the Charleston Bluejays and the Dogwood Azalea Festival. They are natives to Southeast Missouri and so many people are praying for Marshall. The community has truly come together to help this family, not only financially, but spiritually.

On July 13, 2012, a neurosurgeon performed a resection of the tumor and Marshall was diagnosed with Atypical Teratoid Rhabdoid or AT/RT.

There are only about 30 cases a year and there is little known research about this tumor. Prognosis has not always been good for those with this type of cancer. Marshall has undergone radiation, chemotherapy, and high-dose chemotherapy with a stem cell transplant. He was admitted back to the hospital on May 17th.

In their own words, a heartwarming story about how it all started The Marshall Pullen Story: "Marshall was healthy - only allergies or the common cold. Nothing serious. He loved playing from sunrise to sunset - reluctantly stopping only to eat or take a nap. He loves tractors, and could even tell you the makes (John Deere, Caterpillar, etc.). He loves being outside, often waking us up in the mornings by saying, "It's a sunny day! Time to wake up!" He likes riding his bicycle, swimming, and going to the park. At night, we would read Curious George books or Dr. Seuss. One of his favorite things to do, regardless of the season, was to turn on the movie The Polar Express and drink hot chocolate - even as recent as the first week in July of this year. He is very observant, spotting airplanes that looked like specs in the sky, and pointing out water towers and irrigation pivots. He is excellent at warning us when there was a cop car down the road - he is always the first to spot one. I cannot stress what an exceptional child he is.

On July 4th, at a family barbecue, Marshall spit up while swimming in the pool. He was so sweet - he waited until he got to the edge of the pool so he wouldn't make a mess. We all thought that eating and swimming so close together made him sick. After that, he was fine. He played all afternoon and evening. He was a little tired at the fireworks display that evening, but he had such a long day. He went home and went to bed.

The next morning, like always, we woke up and headed to Paw Paw's. I dropped him off

and headed to work. I arrived at work at 8:00 and by 8:30, Paw Paw had called to tell me that Marshall was throwing up again. I left work to go pick him up, and called his doctor. The nurse said they had received similar calls from parents with kids vomiting. She said there was a virus going around, and Marshall must have it. I stayed home with him all day. The next morning (Friday the 6th) he seemed to be doing better, so I went on to work. It wasn't long into my morning that dad called again to tell me that Marshall was sick again, but was complaining with a headache. I could hear him crying in the background. I called to make him an appointment with his doctor, and Derrick and I took him that afternoon. His doctor checked him over and said he still felt that Marshall had a virus. He told us to alternate Tylenol and Motrin and call back if he got worse.

Saturday he seemed to be feeling better. He got sick a few times, but he kept his supper down. Sunday morning we all got ready and headed to church, thinking he was doing better. He got sick at church and had to leave. He threw up eight times that day. Late that evening I called the after hours line at the doctor's office and spoke with a nurse in the pediatrics unit at the hospital. She said she didn't feel that he needed to be seen, and told me to follow up with his doctor the next morning.

Monday morning we were back at the doctor's office. This time, his doctor felt that he was dehydrated and decided that he needed to be admitted to the hospital to be given fluids. He said that it would be a short stay. He said once Marshall got some fluids, he would be like a new kid.

We spent the night in the hospital that night. Marshall had a terrible night. I slept with him in bed, and he was up crying every 30 minutes or so. He acted like he was in extreme pain. His nurses didn't want to give him Tylenol because he didn't have a fever, so he was in a lot of pain.

The next day he progressively got worse. We kept telling the nurses that he wasn't acting like himself. He's not a complainer. He doesn't cry like that, so we knew something was wrong. Marshall was completely potty trained at age two-and-a-half. We hadn't bought diapers since Christmas. That Tuesday afternoon, he became incontinent. He also began moaning a lot and wouldn't talk to answer questions or us. He was nearly unresponsive. That evening, he had a seizure. His eyes became bloodshot and deviated to the left. His left arm-twisted and his right leg tightened. His toes pointed out.

The doctor and nurses rushed in. They gave him Ativan in his IV. I remember dropping to my knees and sobbing and praying. I looked up and saw the doctor standing over my baby

looking down at him with helplessness. He looked me in the eye and said, "I don't know. I don't know what's wrong. Where do you want him sent in St. Louis? Which hospital?" I quickly replied, "The best."

Soon after, the team from Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center arrived. Their plan was to take him by ambulance. The hardest part was not being able to ride with him. They said that Cape County Private Ambulance doesn't allow passengers. They said we would have to follow. My mom drove. I remember looking at Marshall as they pushed him into the ambulance and wondering if I would ever see him alive again.

Derrick and I prayed the whole way. We got a call on the way from one of the social workers at Cardinal Glennon. She said the ambulance had to pull over at St. Genevieve. Marshall was having trouble breathing on his own, and the team needed extra hands. She said a helicopter was meeting them there to pick him up and take him the rest of the way. Words can't describe the way I felt at that moment. Fear, helplessness... None of them seem to compare.

We prayed harder. We got another call when we were about 8 minutes away from the hospital that the helicopter had arrived. When we got to the hospital, we ran in, and the social worker I talked to on the phone was waiting on us. She took us back to the ER to a parent conference room. The ER doctor came in to talk to us. She said Marshall had just come out of a CT scan of his head. She told us he had a mass on his brain that was causing all of his symptoms. Within ten minutes of his arrival, the doctors already knew what was wrong.

/images/Marshall Pullen Baby 300.jpg

That night was frightening, to say the least. Dr. Lebovitz, one of the neurosurgeons, performed a surgery inserting an External Ventricular Drain (EVD) into his brain to drain off excess fluid. The next morning we met the neurosurgeon who would be performing Marshall's surgery. His name was Dr. Elbabaa. When he came in the room, he stressed to us how critical the situation was and how sick Marshall was. He said that if Marshall had not arrived at the exact moment he arrived at Cardinal Glennon, he would not have made it through the night. I remember him looking into my eyes when he told me, "We almost lost him last night."

He ordered an MRI and told us he would perform the surgery to remove the tumor on Friday, July 13th. He read the MRI, and believed that the tumor was a benign astrocytoma. It was located in the third ventricle and was partially attached to the thalamus. He said he would not be able to get all of it, but since he felt it was benign, he

said it would not be a problem to leave a portion of the tumor.

The two days between our arrival and the surgery date were so long. Marshall had a lot of complications those two days. On Friday, we waited for what seemed like days for the surgery time to arrive. We cried and prayed all morning. Derrick and I did fine walking him back to the elevators leading to the OR. Once they wheeled him in and we had to stay behind, though, we lost it.

Our family and friends nearly filled the surgery waiting room. It's an amazing feeling knowing how many people care about us and support us, even now. The surgery was over much sooner than planned. Dr. Elbabaa came out and pulled us into a conference room to talk to us. He said the surgery went well, but not necessarily as planned. He said that Marshall's tumor was more aggressive than he thought. He said about one-third of it was attached to the thalamus and the wall of the third ventricle. He said that he was able to remove 95% of it, but he had to leave a portion attached to the thalamus. It was just too risky to remove. He said he felt that, after looking at it, the tumor was not an astrocytoma, but was a neurocytoma, but was still most likely benign.

A couple of days later, he had a follow-up MRI. The results showed that the tumor was completely resected (removed). Dr. Elbabaa said he left part of it, so we believe God finished the surgery for him.

Once the pathology reports started coming back, Dr. Elbabaa told us that the tumor appeared to be more malignant than they originally thought. Once the final report came back, he told us that it was determined to be an Atypical Teratoid Rhabdoid Tumor (AT/RT).

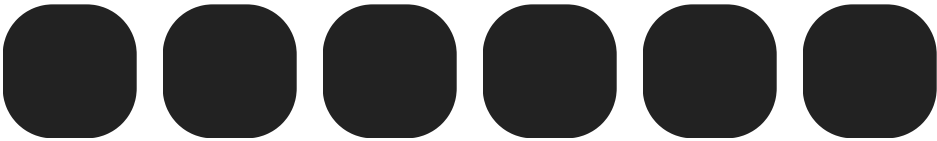
He needs lots of prayers, because he needs a miracle. Please pray and believe with us. We want our little boy back. We pray that he progresses quickly, we pray that the cancer treatment has no side effects, and we are praying and believing for complete healing and restoration. May God bless each and every one of you reading this. Thank you for your prayers and support."

Stephanie and Derrick also try to update the Caring Bridge page nearly every evening. You can visit their Caring Bridge page at: www.caringbridge.org/visit/marshallpullen. He also has a Facebook page Pullen For Marshall with over 10,000 Likes.

Marshall is truly a miracle child. We hope the best for the Pullen family and for little Marshall. May God bless this family in their time of need.

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DPR To Host Open House and Ribbon Cutting

JUNE 11TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

DPR To Host Open House and Ribbon Cutting

*Written by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Writer*

Dexter, Missouri – The new Park and Recreation office is now open for business and will host an Open House on Friday, June 21st.

The beautifully designed and decorated building was built under budget and took only eight months of construction. Employees will have their own working area or office.

The large conference room will seat about 30 people and this will help with the many meetings they have scheduled specifically for coaches and staff.

“We are very happy with how the building looks,” according to Park Director Lawson Metcalf. “Once the outside concrete is complete, I expect to be right on target with the proposed cost of \$160,000.”

The new building is located at 500 Fairgrounds Drive and is open from 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, with a lunch break at noon.

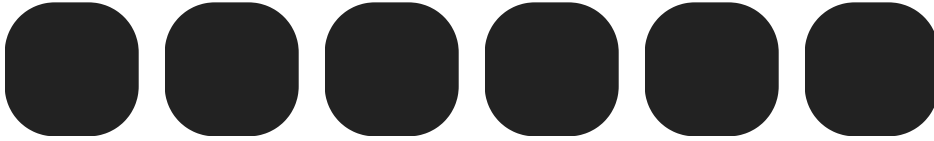
A special ribbon cutting is scheduled at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, June 21st with a reception and Open House until 2:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

If you would like more information about the Park and Recreation Department, contact them at 624-8244 or find them online at <http://dexterpark-rec.com/>. They even have a Facebook page, Dexter Parks & Recreation. You may also email them at dexterparkrec@semo.net.

Their mission is to maintain, develop, and expand green space and accessible leisure facilities, along with coordination of quality recreational programming in the spirit of sportsmanship, safety and fair competition.

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ShowMe Whatcha Got WINNER Named

JUNE 11TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

ShowMe Whatcha Got WINNER Named

*Submitted by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Writer*

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - Sikeston native Anna Catherine DeHart dazzled a sold-out crowd at the Tinnin Center in Poplar Bluff on Saturday, June 1, walking away with the \$1,000 grand prize as “Show Me Whatcha Got” wrapped up a second star-studded season.

DeHart battled her way out of the Final Twelve with her cover of “Good Girl” by Carrie Underwood, landing her in the Top Two alongside Lontonio Mathis, who performed a mashup of “Gonna Be Okay” by Chris Renee and Diddy’s “Coming Home.” For the final round, DeHart performed “So Small” by Carrie Underwood, wooing the audience vote to secure her victory.

“I hadn’t seen the show last year, so I had no idea what to expect,” said DeHart. “I was surprised at how organized and professional of a production it is. This community has a great competition going, and I’m proud I get to represent it!”

The finale show also featured the return of Season 1 winner Tanisha Jones, who performed “Brokenhearted” by Karmin and “Listen” by Beyonce between the Final Twelve and Top Two rounds. Local vocalist Rebekah Northern opened the finale with a short pre-show set. Zach McAnulty also returned from Season 1, reprising his role as show host.

“I think we had a fantastic finale show, between the great turn-out and the incredible talent,” said Mitch Davis, the show’s creator and a member of its judging panel. “Anna Catherine performed like there was no tomorrow. It was a great competition, and we’re looking forwards to seeing where her career takes her.”

DeHart is currently studying Music Business at Belmont University in Nashville, where she is also pursuing a career as a singer/songwriter. In addition to the

\$1,000 grand prize, she also will receive a recording package with the Walker Brothers Studio in Bernie, MO. She plans to use her winnings to help produce her first album.

Mathis, a Poplar Bluff native and recent graduate of PBHS, also received a recording package as a second place prize. He will attend Three Rivers College in the fall.

"I think this season's show was a huge success," said Tabitha Pierce, who reprised her role as a member of the judging panel from Season 1. "I think we found a wonderful star in Anna Catherine, and we also got to see how much Tanisha Jones has grown as a performer since Season 1. The finale was just a special night for our show."

"With Season 2 of Show Me Whatcha Got being my first year on board, I feel like I have almost been spoiled due to the productiveness of the show," said Leeza Edmundson, one of the two new additions to the show's judging panel. "We are extremely fortunate to have a crew that works diligently until the job is done and it paid off on June 1. I'm obsessed with broadening the coverage of Show Me Whatcha Got and cannot wait for Season 3!"

"I didn't know it was possible to have more fun at a show than I had during Season 1, but this year has been much better by leaps and bounds," said Zach McAnulty, the show's host. "The people that were on staff and the contestants were phenomenal and I count it a blessing to be a part of it. I can't wait for next season!"

All twelve finalists were survivors of the six-month-long audition process that began in early January. Over 100 contestants submitted audition tapes, with less than half moving on to the first round of live auditions in April. The Final Twelve were selected by the show's four-judge panel, based off of performances in the live auditions and a closed-door Challenge Round. To view exclusive videos, photos, and interviews with the finalists of Show Me Whatcha Got Season 2, as well as information on next year's Season 3, visit facebook.com/showmewhatchagot.

Shown in the picture are Adam Davis, Tabitha Pierce, Anna Catherine DeHart, Mitch Davis, Leeza Edmundson, and Zach McAnulty.

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Friday Is National Donut Day

JUNE 06TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

Friday Is National Donut Day

*Written by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Writer*

Dexter, Missouri – Friday, June 7th is National Donut Day! Whether it's jelly-filled, powdered, chocolate or frosted, donuts have been one of America's favorite sugary treats.

The Salvation Army began the tradition in 1938 by having a Donut Day Fundraiser to help those struggling during the war. To honor all of the thousands of female volunteers who served donuts to soldiers behind the front lines in World War I the first Friday of June became a national day to celebrate.

In honor of National Donut Day and those women who risked their lives to offer a little taste of home to the soldiers, pick up some freshly baked treats for your friends, family, and employees. The yummy treats will bring smiles to their faces!

Dexter's newly opened **Holey Cow Cafe** offers freshly served donuts daily. They are located in the old Wendy's building at 1119 N. Mile Road, near Burger King.

They offer Glazed, Long John's, Cinnamon Rolls, Twists, Cake, Jelly, and Cream-filled donuts. Some with sprinkles on top, others covered in chocolate. YUM!

Enjoy watching them prepare the donuts by hand using a family recipe that dates way back. Choose just one or pick up a dozen. Either way you will love their donuts!

And while you are there try their premium, gourmet coffee roasted and blended to perfection. Their specialty flavored syrups help create just eh perfect cup of java to start your morning. They also offer a large selection of cappuccinos, frappes, and smoothies.

In honor of National Donut Day, pick up some freshly baked treats for your friends, family, and employees. The yummy treats will bring smiles to their faces!

*Holey Cow Cafe has a great special, **ONE DOZEN GLAZED DONUTS FOR \$6.50.** HONOR those that served and celebrate with a donut!*

LAST UPDATED ON JUNE 06TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Allen Christian To Host Stuff A Truck

JUNE 06TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

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*Written by
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Dexter, Missouri - One local business is reaching out to lend a hand to the Stoddard County Gospel Mission. Allen Christian Buick GMC will host a Stuff-A-Truck event on Wednesday, June 12, 2013. Items may be dropped off between the hours of 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

With the schools out for summer, many children go without food. Hundreds of families seek help at the Stoddard County Gospel Mission each month.

We can help these families and their children by donating non-perishable foods such as can goods, canned vegetables, box drinks, dry goods, crackers, peanut butter, can tuna, and fruit snacks.

The Stoddard County Gospel Mission's store is open Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

The Food Bank is open Monday - Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 4 p.m. and they ask that you call 624-8979 to schedule a time as they have so many families needing food.

"The food collected at Allen Christian will stay local and be donated to our Mission," stated Kim Slavings, Director of the Stoddard County Gospel Mission.

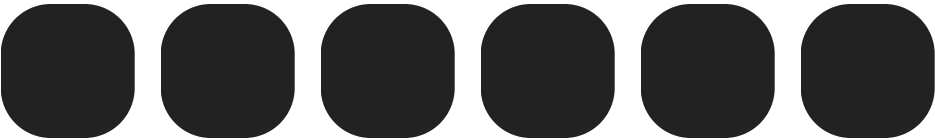
Hunger is a problem right here in our community. Please help a fellow neighbor and

donate to those who are suffering.

LAST UPDATED ON JUNE 06TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

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