

Survey: Companies urge wellness

A recent survey of local companies' health insurance offerings released by Toledo-based Brooks Insurance Agency showed among local employers' favorite wellness programs were employee assistance programs (40 percent) and handing out medical information (29 percent). About 24 percent of companies surveyed offered health club membership discounts. About 21 percent of companies offered smoking cessation programs and 9 percent offered obesity management.



Sleep, behavior may be linked

University of Michigan researchers believe they have found a link between behavior and sleep. Building on research published in 2002, the researchers found that children with snoring, sleep apnea or other breathing problems were more likely to have daytime behavior problems such as hyperactivity or attention problems than children without sleeping problems. The new study was published in the July 1 issue of the journal SLEEP.

Your Health

A guide to better living through fitness, medicine, diet and wellness

section
C
THE MONROE
EVENING NEWS
TUESDAY
JULY 5, 2005

Stacy Kess, health editor
phone: 240-5762
e-mail: stacyk@monroenews.com

The Monroe Evening News

HEALTH
CALENDAR

Hearing, vision
tests offered

The Monroe County Health Department will offer free hearing and vision screening for children ages 3 to 5 in the Monroe Public Schools district who have not been screened previously for hearing and vision problems since turning 3.

Screenings will be held from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and from 1 to 3 p.m. July 12-15 and July 19-22 at Cantrick Middle School, 1008 Riverview Ave. An appointment is required.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 240-7855.

Free HIV test
at teen center

Oakwood Healthcare System's Taylor Teen Health Center offers free, confidential HIV testing.

The mouth-swab test offers results in about two weeks and results are confidential.

Testing is offered from 2 to 7 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays and from 1 to 6 p.m. Fridays at 26650 Eureka Rd. For more information on the Taylor Teen Health Center or HIV testing, call 942-2273, ext. 5.

Volunteers to aid
with Medicare

The Area Agency on Aging 1-B, in conjunction with area groups, senior centers and senior residences, is training volunteers to assist seniors and other Medicare-eligible people choose the correct plan this fall. That is when Medicare will offer new prescription plans to replace the temporary prescription card offered since early 2004.

Once the initial volunteer training is completed, volunteers are asked to provide at least 10 prescription assistance referrals a month, attend periodic update trainings and complete monthly reports for the AAA-1B.

Training will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. July 20 at the Monroe Senior Center, 15275 S. Dixie Hwy.

For more information, call Carrie Shea at (800) 803-7174.

Needs fair seeks
firms, helpers

TOLEDO — The Community Needs Fair, held in December at Shriners Hall in Toledo, is seeking businesses and volunteers to help with the event.

The fair will be used to distribute information to those with physical or mental difficulties. Social organizations, services, businesses, groups, churches or individuals interested in displaying services or volunteering time at the benefit dance for those with autism, can call (419) 862-0098.

To submit an item for the next health calendar, send items to stacyk@monroenews.com or via fax at 242-0937.

SARAH'S SECOND CHANCE



Six-year-old Sarah Gravel (right) has been jaundiced since birth, shortly after which she was diagnosed with neonatal hepatitis. The catchall diagnosis simply meant that she was born with a bad liver, which became increasingly cirrhotic over time. In mid-May, Sarah officially was placed on the national transplant list.

On the waiting list

6-year-old Sarah and her family await a much-needed liver transplant

STORY BY STACY KESS ■ PHOTOS BY KIM BRENT

A phone call that Tuesday afternoon gave Ron and Michelle Gravel a bit of hope. On May 10, Michelle was notified her 6-year-old daughter, Sarah, was eligible for a much-needed liver transplant and soon would be added to the waiting list.

"The first night (we learned about the transplant option), I was petrified," the Monroe mother said moments after the phone call, her eyes still filled with a strange mix of fear and joy. "I'm still worried, of course. There are still risks, and it's not a cure-all."

But it could save Sarah's life, which has been marked by illness since birth.

The start of life and disease

In 1999, after a rough pregnancy, Michelle gave birth to Sarah. Michelle had developed preeclampsia during her first pregnancy with 8-year-old Jacob. The disorder returned during her pregnancy with Sarah and would show its worst symptoms with 2-year-old Anna. Preeclampsia rarely threatens the health of a child and it was not nearly as bad with Sarah as with Michelle's other two pregnancies. That's why Sarah's obvious condition was so strange.

"Her birth was normal, but she was small," she recalled. "I definitely noticed. I knew she was definitely not a normal color."

At the time, she was told jaundice was normal in a newborn and would disappear. It didn't.

When Sarah was 2 months old, her pediatrician noticed the "olive" skin and ordered blood tests.

"She called me that night and said, 'You're going to University of Michigan Hospital, 8 a.m.'" Michelle said.

At UM Hospital in Ann Arbor, a doctor delivered strange news: She could feel Sarah's liver.

"And she said, 'That's not good. I didn't want to feel it,'" Michelle recalled. "They

tested her for everything they could think of.

"Once they ruled out everything else, they said she's a baby with neonatal hepatitis, and that just literally means a baby with a swollen liver," Michelle said. "They called it a wastebasket term ... It was just something to write on the paper."

The diagnosis came with a price: Sarah probably would need a new liver someday. It also came with complications.

At 2 months old, Sarah was airlifted to UM Hospital because a blood vessel in her cheek was expanding. It was accompanied by loss of clotting ability and bleeding into her brain.

Doctors told the Gravels their daughter had expanded, easily ruptured blood vessels in her throat wall, which usually occurs when blood flow diminishes in the liver. Vitamin K improved the immediate situation but Sarah continued to have complications from the disease affecting her liver.

By the time Sarah was 8 months old, she was diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver.

At age 2, Sarah woke up in a pool of bloody vomit, another fault of the blood



Sarah loves to draw, filling notebook upon notebook with artwork, some of which depicts her condition. The girl with the bad liver bears her characteristic swollen belly and the yellow eyes that had become a source of teasing from her peers. Her jaundice made her stand out, causing her to withdraw from anyone outside of her family. She never spoke more than a whisper in her teacher's ear in her kindergarten class.

SARAH'S SECOND CHANCE

Today — Part 1: On the waiting list

July 12 — Part 2: The night before

July 19 — Part 3: A new liver, a new lease

July 26 — Part 4: A new life at home

See SARAH, Page 4C

FROM PAGE 1C

Sarah (cont.)

vessels in her throat.

For four years, Sarah's liver died little by little in her belly, which swelled as the liver enlarged and hardened.

Separated by disease

Her growth stunted by her body's failures, her skin a crayon mustard yellow, her eyes the color of sulfur, her cheeks covered by a web of thin red veins and her belly swollen and round, Sarah hides behind her mother, exhibiting another side effect of her disease: a severe shyness.

The disease has been tough on her, setting her apart from the other children in physical ability and in appearance. She had to worry about bumps and bruises that possibly could damage her liver.

"She cannot play contact sports ... because her liver and spleen stick out so much, they're afraid she'll get injured," Michelle said. "Her classmates ask why she's yellow and why her eyes are yellow and it bothers her," Michelle said.

But once around her family or closest friends, Sarah explodes like a pinata with a Woody the Woodpecker giggle and a sharp wit developed far beyond her 6 years. She boisterously yells "loser" while holding her fingers in the shape of an L against her forehead when she shows her master prowess at her favorite board game, Sorry. She reads aloud to her sister, Anna. She teases her brother, Jacob.

Ready and waiting

Ron and Michelle Gravel first met with the transplant team May 3 to discuss the option of transplant, the risks of transplant rejection and the effects of lifetime anti-rejection therapy.

"They told us it's like trading one chronic illness for another," Michelle said. "But when it gets to this point it's the best option."

They agreed to the transplant and were notified a week later that Sarah met all qualifications for a transplant, so her name was soon to be on a list — one that she would top because of her condition. Her



Sarah jokes with her grandmother, Maureen Palmer, better known as Baba, during a visit May 13, as her mother, Michelle Gravel (right) looks on. Baba not only cares for Sarah as a grandmother, but also keeps a watchful eye on her medical condition as a nurse.



Sarah giggles as her grandmother shows her the first check donated to help defray her medical costs and help the family afford a reliable used vehicle to transport Sarah between Monroe and Ann Arbor for appointments. The family is involved in various fundraising efforts and maintains a Web site chronicling Sarah's progress.

pediatric end-stage liver disease (PELD), ranked numerically for liver allocation, was 16, meaning she was in moderate need. Sarah also was the only patient with O blood type on the pediatric list.

Michelle later wrote in a journal shared with friends: "Unfortunately that means sorrow for another family. The reality is sort of getting tougher to face. But Jesus said

not to worry about tomorrow. Today has sufficient trouble of its own."

A new liver could come at anytime once on the list, the doctors told the Gravels.

"I prayed ... and I said, 'There's absolutely nothing I can do,'" Michelle said. "It's all in (God's) hands."

On the morning of May 10, Michelle took Sarah and Anna

SCORE DETERMINES WHO GETS AN ORGAN

An organ-transplant waiting list is not first-come, first-served. In fact, many factors play into who gets an organ when.

On a pediatric liver waiting list, patients are assigned a Pediatric End-Stage Liver Disease (PELD) number. The number is used to rank patients in a way that the patient is on the list among others waiting. An adult waiting for a liver is assigned a similar score called a Model for End-Stage Liver Disease (MELD) number. The United Network for Organ Sharing began using the PELD score in 2002.

Factors used in calculating a PELD score are:

- Laboratory values of albu-

min (liver protein), bilirubin (a product found when hemoglobin is broken down by the liver) and blood clotting capacity.

- Failure of growth.
- Age when added to the transplant waiting list.

The PELD scale ranges from 6 to 40, predicting the likelihood the child will die within three months. The higher the score, the more likely the child is to die before a transplant within three months.

But the PELD score is only one part of waiting for a liver. Blood type is used to finding a matching donor. Both factors play into how long a child might be on a waiting list.

“ We’re raising money to help. There’s going to be a lot of cost when you’re in the hospital. People are being so generous.”

— Maureen (Baba) Palmer, Sarah's grandmother

Palmer — known affectionately as Baba to her grandchildren — was ready with a plan, printing out fliers and collecting giant plastic jars for donation jars at local businesses. There would be T-shirts, with the popular organ-donation slogan "Don't take your organs to heaven ... heaven knows we need them here" on the back.

A good Friday

On May 13, around 12:30 p.m., Sarah officially was placed on the transplant waiting list.

Later that day — just three days after the bank account was open — Baba, who drove from her home in Belleville, opened the door to the Gravel's Monroe apartment full of news. She had the first check, \$250 from Bill Brown Ford, a Livonia car dealership. Sarah quickly snatched it and held it close to her chest.

"We're raising money to help. There's going to be a lot of

BORN YELLOW

About 20 percent of neonatal hepatitis cases, the cause of Sarah's jaundice, are caused by a virus in utero or just after birth, the American Liver Foundation said. The other cases have unknown causes. About 20 percent of cases showing combined cells in biopsy will progress into cirrhosis of the liver.

cost when you're in the hospital," Baba explained to her in soft tones. "People are being so generous."

Sarah settled into Baba's lap while Baba explained the source and destination of the funds to her. Around them, the family settled into a Friday night routine, playing and laughing and finishing chores.

About 7:30 p.m., as Anna, Sarah and Jacob settled in for a story before bed, the phone rang.

Do You Want To Look Younger?

Thermage may be the answer you are looking for. **Thermage**, as seen on Oprah and Good Morning America, is a non-surgical procedure. **Thermage reduces the signs of aging, leaving you with a more youthful appearance.**

Also Available:

- Botox • Restylane • Superficial & Intermediate Peels
- Sclerotherapy • Mesotherapy
- Laser • Skin Products

Call Gayle McMurdo, Licensed Practical Nurse, for a free consultation.

Paulette Moulton-Levy MD PC
2246 N. Monroe Street
Monroe, MI 48162
(734) 241-4950

Eye Care One
"Distinctively Different"

Formerly Superior Eye Associates

Glasses while you wait!

Eye Exams • Contacts

504 N. Telegraph Rd.,
Monroe, MI

Call today to make an appointment.
Evening and Weekend appoints also available.
Walk-ins welcome.
(734) 243-2020

Owned and operated by Dr. Douglas W. Baltrip

Most Insurances Accepted

VISA, MCVIS, MasterCard, VSP

Fast - Friendly - Courteous - Trustworthy

Prescriptions for the whole family!

FLAVOR VETERINARY SYSTEM
Flavoring of liquid medicine for adults and children.

"Your Hometown Pharmacy"

call 734-586-7501
Weisel Clinic Pharmacy
7505 Grafton Road • Newport, Michigan 48166
Open Mon. - Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-2

IN PAIN?

It worked for us!

"Dr. Henderson has improved my life tremendously! I was in severe pain when I started coming here. This is the first time I have ever wanted to go to the doctor's office. I am more active and improving with each visit. Thank you to all the wonderful staff also." M.Z.

"Dear Dr. Rehman: I would like to express to you and your staff how thankful I am that they were there to help me from the time I came in the door; I was greeted with a smile or a kind word. It is hard for me to put into words what is in my heart but you do have a great staff working for you. May God bless you and your staff." E.A.

It can work for you, too!

REHABILITATION SPECIALISTS Call 734-241-0560 today!

We specialize in the treatment of pain. • We have a 99% patient satisfaction rate.

Keith R. Barbour, D.O. • Ateeq K. Rehman, M.D. • Reuben S. Henderson, D.O.
876 Stewart Rd., Suite D, Monroe MI 48162

Get the whole story

Missed part one of Sarah's Second Chance? You can still read it. "On the waiting list," the first part of Sarah Gravel's story is online at www.monroenews.com, under Your Health. If you would like a copy of the printed version, give the Monroe Evening News a call at 242-1100 or stop by our customer service desk at 20 W. First St. The July 5 issue, including part one of Sarah's Second Chance in Your Health, can be purchased for 50 cents.



Sunglasses should absorb UV light

Dark lenses aren't necessarily the best protection for your eyes from the sun. When choosing sunglasses, look for lenses that absorb 99 to 100 percent of UV light, especially UV-B. The tint doesn't mean as much as the protective lens, according to Lighthouse International, a vision advocacy group. Without the use of protective lenses outdoors, it could take up to 30 minutes to adjust to indoor light. The lack of lenses also could damage your eyes.

Your Health

A guide to better living through fitness, medicine, diet and wellness

section **C**
THE MONROE EVENING NEWS
TUESDAY
JULY 12, 2005

Stacy Kess, health editor
phone: 240-5762
e-mail: stacyk@monroenews.com

The Monroe Evening News

HEALTH CALENDAR

Volunteers to aid with Medicare

The Area Agency on Aging 1-B, in conjunction with area groups, senior centers and senior residences, is training volunteers to assist seniors and other Medicare-eligible people in choosing the correct plan this fall, when Medicare will offer new prescription plans to replace the temporary prescription card offered since early 2004.

Once the initial volunteer training is completed, volunteers are asked to provide at least 10 prescription assistance referrals a month, attend periodic update trainings and complete monthly reports for the AAA-1B.

Training will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. July 20 at the Monroe Senior Center, 15275 S. Dixie Hwy. Lunch will be provided.

For more information, call Carrie Shea at (800) 803-7174.

Hearing, vision tests offered

The Monroe County Health Department will offer free hearing and vision screening for children ages 3 to 5 in the Monroe Public Schools district who have not been screened previously for hearing and vision problems since turning 3.

Screenings will be held from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and from 1 to 3 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and July 19-22 at Cantrick Middle School, 1008 Riverview Ave. An appointment is required.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 240-7855.

Tecumseh run funds scholarship

TECUMSEH — The 11th annual Kelly Carter Scholarship run is slated for July 30, with all proceeds benefiting the Kelly Carter Scholarship.

Participation costs \$15 if mailed before July 22 and \$20 for race-day sign-up. The 1-mile fun walk costs \$10. All fees include a run T-shirt.

Applications are available at 109 Herrick Park Dr. and 1525 W. Maumee St., Suite 3, Adrian.

The race begins at 8 a.m. at the Carter Rehab Center. For more information, contact Angie at (517) 423-7722 or e-mail angie_birdsall@yahoo.com.

Needs fair seeks firms, helpers

TOLEDO — The Community Needs Fair, held in December at Shriners Hall in Toledo, is seeking businesses and volunteers to help with the event.

The fair will be used to distribute information to those with physical or mental difficulties. Social organizations, services, businesses, groups, churches or individuals interested in displaying services or volunteering time at the benefit dance for those with autism, can call (419) 862-0098.

To submit an item for the next health calendar, send items to stacyk@monroenews.com or via fax at 242-0937.

SARAH'S SECOND CHANCE



Michelle and her mother, Maureen, help Sarah read from one of several hospital-provided books that help young patients understand the need for, and experience of, receiving an organ transplant. It was one of the many activities that the family engaged in as they passed the numerous hours in their hospital room prior to Sarah's surgery.

The night before

Her parents worry, wonder and wait as Sarah spends her last night with her diseased liver

STORY BY STACY KESS ■ PHOTOS BY KIM BRENT

ANN ARBOR — After only 8½ hours on the transplant list, Sarah Gravel was settling into a hospital room at the end of the hallway at University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, 5-West.

The 6-year-old neonatal hepatitis patient officially had been placed on the liver transplant list at 12:36 p.m. May 13. Doctors located a potential liver about two hours later. At 7:30 p.m., as Sarah, her brother, Jacob, 8, and her sister, Anna, 2, were finishing their nightly chore of picking up the living room and choosing bedtime stories, their mother, Michelle Gravel, received the call: a potential liver had been found.

The family flew into action and said a quick prayer for the family of the person who had died, possibly saving Sarah's life in the process. Jacob and Anna were sent off with Baba, their grandmother, Maureen Palmer, to their grandfather's house, while Mrs. Gravel and her husband, Ron, began the trek to UM Mott Hospital, the state's only pediatric liver transplant facility, where a second chance at life awaited for their daughter.

An Evening News reporter and photographer documented the experience.

9:15 p.m. May 13, Mott Children's Hospital, fifth floor west, Room 514

Sarah explored the new surroundings of her room — a small cube of hospital-white walls, punctuated with a large framed picture of Donald Duck, computers, equipment and a small alcove off to one side leading to a bathroom — while Michelle filled out a thick packet of registration and consent forms.

"Now I'm shaking," Michelle said, following each line of the form with the pen. For only a moment, the shaking stopped — enough time for her to tease her daughter: "Sarah, do you smoke or drink?"

Sarah giggled and shook her head no. "Any problems peein' or poopin'?" Michelle asked.

"Who?" Ron said, looking up with a grin from his spot wedged between a duffel bag and pillow on the vinyl bench along the wall. "Oh, you mean Sarah."

Sarah, shy around most people, displayed the giddiness and energy of a child headed



"I'm the doctor," Sarah playfully explains, as she dons a stethoscope and, with mom Michelle's guidance, tries to listen to her heartbeat.

SARAH'S SECOND CHANCE

July 5 — Part 1: On the waiting list

Today — Part 2: The night before

July 19 — Part 3: A new liver, a new lease

July 26 — Part 4: A new life at home



Sarah hides behind "Duckina" and burrows into her mothers lap as Dr. M. James Lopez explains the procedures involved with Sarah's surgery to the waiting family.

See SARAH, Page 2C

FROM PAGE 1C

DONATING LIFE: HOW IT WORKS

When a patient designates his organs and tissue for donation after death in Michigan, Gift of Life, the Michigan nonprofit donation group that acts as an intermediate between donor and recipient is called into help.

When a potential organ donor is admitted to the hospital, every attempt is made to save the patient's life, compliant with the patient's wishes and the family's wishes.

■ When death occurs, Gift of Life is notified. Gift of Life checks the patient's name against the registry to determine if the patient had intended for his organs and tissues to be donated. If the name is not on the list, the family is offered the opportunity to make such a donation. If the family agrees, they provide written consent to organ and tissue donation.

■ When organ donation is approved with the family (and, in some instances, the coroner or medical examiner), the donor's body is maintained with a ventilator and drugs while tests are performed for each organ's viability. While tests are completed, potential recipients are identified through the United Network for Organ Sharing. Donors in Michigan will first be matched to Michigan recipients. If no Michigan recipient are identified, the organ will then be matched to Indiana and Ohio residents.

■ An organ recovery team, a special surgical team that removes the organs from the donor and prepares them for donation, begins removing the usable organs from the donor. Organs are cooled and prepared in a special solution to preserve them until transplant. Once all organs are removed, the tissues are removed and prepared for transplant. The heart, kidneys, liver, lungs, intestines and pancreas can be harvested for organ donation and the cornea or eyes, skin, bones, heart valves, veins and tendons can be harvested for tissue donation.

■ Once the process is completed, the donor is released to the family for funeral arrangements. During the donation process, all attempts are made to maintain the body's appearance so the family can plan an open-casket funeral if desired.

Because donating an organ postmortem can be an emotional experience of loss for the family, Gift of Life and the United Network for Organ Sharing attempt to maintain the anonymity of the donor for at least a year after the donation process. At the end of the year, the opportunity is given to the donor and recipient family to make contact.

Although organ and tissue donation may be marked on the back of a Michigan driver's license, driver's licenses are not available or consulted for many hospital deaths. As the Michigan organ and tissue donation network, Gift of Life is notified when any Michigan hospital death occurs. Gift of Life urges all Michiganders to sign up on the Gift of Life registry at www.giftoflifemichigan.org to avoid any confusion or delays if they wish to donate their organs and tissues at death, and to discuss their donation wishes with their families.



A couple of hours into the family's hours-long wait before Sarah's transplant surgery, Ron feels his anxiety getting the better of him and steps out of the room to collect his thoughts and feelings as Sarah and Michelle continue reading in her room at Mott Children's Hospital.



Michelle Gravel tries to steady Sarah as Nurse Hannah Bufford inserts her first IV before surgery.



Shortly after her IV has been inserted and secured, Sarah is back to her coloring books and crayons, drawing and playing well into the early morning hours before her surgery.

“You keep holding still and saying ‘ow.’”

—Michelle Gravel, Sarah's mother

Sarah (cont.)

to the amusement park as she played with the pedal-operated hand sink across from her new bed and dug through the salmon pink bucket of amenities — a pair of yellow slipper-socks at least two sizes too big for her, a stethoscope and several wash cloths — on the table.

Her excitement turned to fireworks when Baba appeared in the door caring a plush, stuffed duck, affectionately called “Duckina” after Jacob's similar stuffed animal, “Ducky.”

“Happy new liver,” Baba embraced her granddaughter.

“Happy new liver,” Sarah parroted.

10:01 p.m., Room 514

Ron watched Sarah, her golden skin, yellow eyes and ballooned abdomen carried by a tiny body stunted by illness.

His eyes welled up from panic. He pushed himself off the bench and slipped out into the hallway, standing just out of sight from the hallway window into Sarah's room.

“I just had...” he trailed off, his eyes shifting from the floor to the ceiling. “I can't let her see me like this.”

He drew in a long, slow

breath, then swallowed hard.

“I've just stuffed, I've stuffed everything inside and it's just...” He motioned forward.

Over his right shoulder, the hallway window framed Sarah in her hospital room, flipping through “Lizzy Gets a New Liver,” a children's book describing liver transplants.

The hospital room was a somewhat familiar setting for Sarah, who was at Mott only a few months earlier because of a high fever. It wasn't long after that the family first met with the

transplant team.

“You know what's amazing?” Baba asked, ready with an answer. “To think we won't have to do hospital stays after (the transplant).”

Baba, Michelle and Ron — who, now composed, again sat wedged between bags and pillows — exchanged exhausted glances.

Sarah looked at her dad, her head tipped to one side.

“Go to sleep,” she instructed nonchalantly, “You look tired.”

“Thanks, boss,” he said, cracking a smile.

11:15 p.m., Room 514

Dr. M. James Lopez greeted the Gravels with a toothy smile.

“Dr. Magee tells me you want a liver transplant tonight,” he said.

Sarah rolled her eyes, pulled the stethoscope from the bucket on the table, wrapped it around her neck and stood up on the bed.

“I'm the doctor,” she said.

Despite her efforts, Dr. Lopez continued with his intended purpose: “Once

she's asleep, she'll get an arterial line. It's a special line that goes into the wrists,” he said. “We use every monitor possible to see how her physiology's doing at all times.”

The transplant would take anywhere from six to 12 hours — that is, assuming the liver was usable. Dr. Magee and his team had not yet seen the liver and would not see it until it arrived, when would decide if the liver was healthy enough for transplant. The procedure itself was not risk-free, carrying with it the possibility of bleeding, blood clots, complications from anesthesia and malfunction of other organs. Infection is possible, as is rejection of the new organ.

Sarah's vigor faded as Dr. Lopez described the process, and the severe shyness that plagues her around most people returned. She clutched Duckina and curled into a ball, burying her head in her mother's lap. She pulled a plaid pastel blanket over her small body, remaining silent until Dr. Lopez bid the family good night.

“I want to get a movie,” Sarah whimpered.

“She's tired,” Ron said, pulling out an energy drink.

“You know, at some point, I'm going to have to catch some sleep,” Michelle said.

“Maybe next Tuesday,” Ron quipped.

“I guess the enormity of it hit me when (Dr. Lopez) started talking about the lines,” Michelle said.

Ron nodded in agreement.

“My anxiety level went up times 10,” he said. “You run into a brick wall.”

1:14 a.m., Room 514

“You don't have to like it, but you have to get it,” Michelle coaxed her daughter to calm down.

Nurse Hannah Bufford held a tray of plastic needles and tubes, all for Sarah's IV line.

“Mama will be right here with you,” Michelle said.

“One, two, three,” the nurse counted, puncturing the skin on Sarah's right hand.

She screamed in pain.

When the nearly two-minute process ended, Sarah again buried her head in her mother's lap, holding out her limp hand like an injured paw. The needle had to be redone.

Michelle rubbed her back. “It's okay.”

“I don't want another one,” Sarah shrieked.

“You keep holding still and

See **SARAH**, Page 3C

Experience The Latest In Digital Hearing Technology
The Office of
Levy & Levy, M.D., P.C.
Office Visits By Appointment!

- No volume controls, whistling or discomfort
- Demonstrations of state-of-the-art digital hearing aid technology
- In-office demonstration of hearing aids available by appointment

Certified Audiologist • Licensed Hearing Aid Dispenser

THE CENTER FOR BETTER HEARING 2246 N. Monroe St. • Monroe, MI 48162 (734) 243-0220

Ryan Meredith
M.A., C.C.C.-A, Audiologist
Mon.-Fri. 8-5
Selected Saturdays by appointment

Spotlight On:

Foot & Ankle Specialists

Dr. Amy Balettie, Dr. Scott Hughes and Dr. Gregory P. Vogt

HELP WITH EDEMA

Edema is marked by end-of-day swelling of the feet and ankles. The condition occurs when gravity drags the body's fluids downward toward the feet, which encourages swelling. To help alleviate edema episodes, reduce salt consumption, which can contribute to fluid retention. Exercise regularly to boost circulation and encourage weight loss, as excess weight slows circulation and puts excess pressure on veins. Avoid long stretches of sitting. Get up to move around periodically while at the office or on a flight. During long car trips, make frequent stops to stretch the legs. Tell your doctor about edema, and ask to review any medications you take that may contribute to swelling. Seek medical attention for persistent swelling.

possible foot care by being a fully informed patient. That's why we bring you this podiatry column, and that's why we take as much time as necessary at your appointment to explain what you need to know about your condition and the treatment options. Whether about edema or nail problems or bunions or any other foot problem, we hope you'll not hesitate to ask as many questions as you need - you can always expect an honest opinion at our office. New patients are always welcome. Visit our website at www.monpod.com.

P.S. Tell your doctor about any swelling episodes that are accompanied by shortness of breath and weight gain or any swelling that damages your skin.

Foot & Ankle Specialists, P.C.
1060 N. Monroe, Monroe - 734/241-0200
8085 Secor Rd., Lambertville - 734/856-8900
www.monpod.com

BY THE NUMBERS

386

The number of Michiganders listed on the transplant waiting list in need of a liver, as of July 1.

12

Age, in days, of the youngest liver recipient was at the time of transplant.

20

Percentage of liver transplants at University of Michigan Hospital performed on children.

LET US ENTERTAIN YOU!

If you're looking for places to go, things to do and people to see... look no further than The Monroe Evening News.

Enter to win dinner and movie tickets in a monthly drawing. Grand prize winner will receive an iPod mini.

Simply fill out the entry form and mail to address listed below.

For more details visit www.monroenews.com

• No purchase necessary to enter; copies of The Monroe Evening News are available at the county libraries or visit www.monroenews.com.
• Contest will run May 1 through July 31, 2005.
• Employees of the Monroe Publishing Co. and their immediate family members are not eligible to win.

Win an iPod Mini!

Entry deadline: Aug. 5, 2005

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____

Mail completed entry form to:
The Monroe Evening News, Attn: Entertainment Contest
P.O. Box 1176, Monroe, MI 48161-9958

FROM PAGE 2C

Sarah (cont.)

saying 'ow,' " Michelle said.

Sarah quieted and looked with curiosity at her right hand, capped with tubes.

Michelle and Ron looked at each other; both clearly exhausted from the sight of Sarah crying from needles, her face twisted with pain.

Baba, quiet in the corner for most of the procedure, broke the silence that settled in after the nurse left. She told the family of 99 jars she had spent the day finishing by pasting on printed explanations of Sarah's condition. The jars would be scattered around southeast Michigan to help defray the costs of Sarah's surgery and perhaps help the family purchase a reliable vehicle to transport Sarah to and from her appointments in Ann Arbor. Now the jars were in need of an edit.

"We'll have to add 'Sarah had her transplant,'" she said.

"It's been a long time since we've had to pull an all-nighter at the hospital," Michelle said.

"Somehow, I don't miss it," Ron said.

Michelle handed Sarah two stickers, one earned for each IV.

"Am I going to have this when I have surgery, Mama?" Sarah asked.

"Yes," Michelle answered. She opened "Lizzy Gets a New Liver" and began to read aloud, a comfort for the adults in the room as well as Sarah.

2:46 a.m., Room 514

"I look silly," Sarah whined, looking at the "before" image of herself on the screen of her mom's digital camera.

"You look cute," Michelle said.

Sarah's silliness turned to thoughts of food. She hadn't eaten since dinner and would not have anything else to eat before surgery. Dreaming of bacon pizza, she grabbed a tissue and bit.

"This isn't food," she said with a giggle, shoving the rest in her mouth. "I can eat it."

"That's why I have problems with my back," Ron said, sighing dramatically. "I'm wrapped around her finger."

Michelle, stretched out on Sarah's bed, looked up, tired.

"Do you have an off switch?" she teased her daughter. "I'm going to ask them to install an off switch."

"Ask them to take her batteries out," Ron added.

"I don't have batteries," Sarah yelled.

Baba, awake but tired, nods to the bag of saline attached to Sarah through the IV. "Are you sure this is normal saline?"

3:36 a.m., Room 514

Baba sat in a rocking chair in the corner, Sarah nestled in her arms like a baby.

On the other side of the room, Michelle and Ron spoke to each other quietly.

"I opened up the thread on the (Web) forum," Ron said. "Capital letters: Sarah is going to the hospital now for her transplant."

"I'm just sort of numb," Michelle said. "I'm waiting."

"I want it to be 24 hours from now," Ron said. "Brain's going a million miles a second ... Actually, I'm very concerned and a bit worried. I had the worst vision, and I just had to stuff it."

"It's okay for you to be terrified," Michelle told him.

"I'm past that," he said.

3:58 a.m., University of Michigan Hospital Emergency Room

The donated liver intended for Sarah arrived at Mott Hospital.

5:18 a.m., Room 514

"Sleeping beauty," Michelle whispered, gazing at a finally napping Sarah.

"She's a silly kid," Ron said.

Michelle studied her husband's face. "You look miserable."

"Tired," he answered. "It set in a while ago. I'm just too tired."

"It hasn't really set in yet," Michelle said. "I keep expect-



In the wee hours of the morning, shortly before Sarah is to be taken down to the OR, she finally falls asleep, as does her father Ron. Michelle, despite having vowed to get some sleep that night, lies awake next to her daughter.

“You’re going to go in and get your new liver. I love you.”

— Michelle, Sarah's mom



Just before Sarah is wheeled through the double doors of the operating suite, the family, including her father, Ron, is allowed to give her a final kiss and hug goodbye. They would head to a different floor to wait the several hours until her surgery was complete.



Her family having kissed and hugged her, Sarah is wheeled down to the OR by members of the anesthesiology team, including Dr. Wilson Chimbra, the attending anesthesiologist for the procedure.

ing them to call it off."

"We've been in the hospital so many times. This doesn't feel any different," Baba said.

5:42 a.m., Room 514

Dr. Magee stood by the door, not yet dressed for surgery. It was the last time he would see the Gravels until after Sarah's surgery.

"She's still obviously sick. She's just sick enough to benefit from this," he said. "The operation may take six to 10 hours, maybe shorter."

Michelle and Ron nodded, taking it in.

"Any questions? If I had answers, I'd be useful," Dr. Magee joked.

"I'm glad, and I'm sad at the same time that it's a whole liver," Michelle said. "I'm glad for Sarah and sad for that (donor)."

"Thank you, God, for the liver and thank you, God, for the family that made that

decision," Baba added.

Nurses scurried around Sarah, readying her for transfer to the operating room. The motion of the gurney woke her to unrecognized surroundings; she whimpered softly, then began to cry.

"It's okay, Mama's got you," Michelle cooed, walking along side the gurney. "Dr. Magee came in. He's the one who's going to do your surgery, and he says your liver looks perfect."

The gurney moved down the hall, leading a solemn procession. Ron followed with bags and Baba with blankets to take with them to the waiting room.

"It's okay to be upset," Michelle continued. "You're going to go in and get your new liver. I love you."

The family squeezed into the elevator alongside Sarah's gurney and anesthesiologist for the trip down two floors. The elevator doors opened in front of the mas-

sive doors leading to the sterile operating rooms, one of which was for Sarah.

"You're going to do just fine," Ron said, kissing her forehead.

"I love you angel baby," Baba said as Sarah faded from the first anesthesia.

Asleep from the anesthesia, Sarah was wheeled through the heavy doors, down the hall and into the bright operating room.

6 a.m., Mott Children's Hospital, third floor, Pediatric Operating Room 4 ...

“Stop in for the health of it.”

Health Food Centre

10% off

total purchase w/this ad. Regular priced items only.

1511 N. Telegraph in the Monroe Mall

242-0700

Locally owned since 1977

M-F: 9:00-7:00
Sat: 9:00-6:00
Sun: 12:00-5:00

MasterCard VISA

Christmas in July Massage Special!

Mercy Memorial Rehabilitation Center is offering a buy one massage and get a second 50% off during the month of July with this ad.

Call for more details at (734) 240-1950.

MERCY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL SYSTEM

EMBARRASSED By Your Tattoo?

Laser tattoo removal can help!

Our advanced Palomar Q-YAG 5™ Laser can remove a wide range of tattoos from virtually any body area. Treatments are quick, comfortable, and non-invasive. Call us today to schedule a consultation and learn more!

Frustrated by Unwanted Hair?

Help is on the way!

The Palomar Medilux™ Pulsed Light System removes hair comfortably and safely, with long lasting results. It can clear the hair from your back or legs in under 30 minutes and treat smaller areas in even less time. Call today for more information!

Under the direction of:
H. George Levy M.D.P.C.
2246 N. Monroe St.
Monroe, MI 48162
Call 734-243-0220
for your Free Consultation

Palomar QYAG5 SYSTEM

Palomar MEDILUX SYSTEM

Find out how it all started

Sarah Gravel's story doesn't end today, and it didn't start today either. On July 5, the 6-year-old liver transplant candidate made her debut in *Your Health*, followed by the documentary of the last night with her diseased liver on July 12. Visit www.monroenews.com/your_health/ to read part one, "On the waiting list," or part 2, "The night before," or visit The Monroe Evening News customer service desk, 20 W. First St., to buy a copy for 50 cents. The series ends July 26.



Michigan health insurance information online

The Michigan Office of Financial and Insurance Services has made information about choosing health insurance and health insurance coverage options in Michigan at www.michigan.gov/ofis, under health insurance information. The site includes a glossary of terms, information on prescription drug coverage, disability income, discount health plans and other health-related topics.

Your Health

A guide to better living through fitness, medicine, diet and wellness

section
C
THE MONROE
EVENING NEWS
TUESDAY
JULY 19, 2005

Stacy Kess, health editor
phone: 240-5762
e-mail: stacyk@monroenews.com

The Monroe Evening News



While Sarah is prepped for surgery in the background, surgeons Dr. John Magee and Dr. Shawn Pelletier (out of frame) perform the delicate task of preparing the donated cadaveric liver for transplantation into Sarah.

A new liver, a new lease

Sarah undergoes a six-hour surgery and days of recovery for the prospect of life with a healthy liver

STORY BY STACY KESS ■ PHOTOS BY KIM BRENT

ANN ARBOR — Six-year-old Sarah Gravel was a firecracker, full of energy the night before the surgery that would remove her failing liver and replace it with a healthy cadaveric donor liver.

On May 13, Sarah's name was added to the transplant list at 12:36 p.m. At 2:23 p.m., a liver was identified. At 3:30 p.m., after reviewing the case, Dr. John Magee, University of Michigan assistant professor of surgery and pediatric liver transplantation surgical director, officially accepted the liver after reviewing the case. The family was notified at 7:30 p.m. that Sarah would have her transplant surgery in the morning, assuming the liver arrived in good shape.

With her parents, Ron and Michelle Gravel, and her grandmother, Maureen (Baba) Palmer, at her side, she laughed and played and read in her room in UM Mott Children's Hospital the night before the surgery. Sarah's siblings, 8-year-old Jacob and 2-year-old Anna, spent the night at the house of their grandfather, Don Cleveland, where Jacob spent much of the night worrying. Early the next morning, Sarah said goodbye to her parents before she was wheeled into the operating room.

A Monroe Evening News reporter and photographer documented the surgery and the events that followed.



Once inside the operating room, Sarah is prepped with more tubes and IVs, including a central line into her carotid artery, an NG tube to her stomach and a catheter. It takes a few attempts for her to be properly intubated, which is necessary to maintain her breathing through the procedure.



Drs. John Magee (left) and Shawn Pelletier work closely as they separate and then reattach all the vessels connected to the liver. Special magnifiers and spotlights attached to their glasses help them see the intricate details, which are intensified by the nature of the pediatric procedure.

SARAH'S SECOND CHANCE

July 5 — Part 1: On the waiting list

July 12 — Part 2: The night before

Today — Part 3: A new liver, a new lease

July 26 — Part 4: A new life at home

May 14, 6:01 a.m., University of Michigan Mott Hospital, third floor, Pediatric Operating Room 4

Sarah lay on the gurney sleeping as the first anesthesia circulated through her system. Her stomach reached high above her jaundiced body, swollen from the liver that had caused her trouble for six years. Against the white sheets, her naked body seemed to glow yellow.

Scrawled writing on a wipe-off board in the corner confirmed the information: Sarah Gravel was the patient and this was a surgery to replace her liver.

Nurses punctured the skin of her neck for a central line, then taped her eyes shut, transforming Sarah into a limp mari-



The surgical team works to maneuver Sarah's swollen and cirrhotic liver out of her body, separating it vessel by vessel, containing bleeding as they go.

See SARAH, Page 2C

FROM PAGE 1C

Sarah (cont.)

onette — tubes splaying from her in all directions.

Intense white light drenched the operating room, paired with a deafening silence broken occasionally by the subtle beep of a monitor or exchanges by Dr. John Magee and his resident, Dr. Shawn Pelletier, who hunched over the new liver, preparing it for surgery.

"This is a beautiful liver. None of our livers look that beautiful," Dr. Magee said, wrapping the liver in sanitary plastic. "This is minimally bigger than I like it, but not much." He returned it to a small plastic picnic cooler.

As Sarah's stomach rose and fell with measured, machined-controlled breath, float nurse Lynn Kaminski covered the area below her ribs with iodine, turning it a deep shade of orange. She wiped Sarah's stomach again then covered it with a sheet of adhesive plastic.

Within minutes, Sarah disappeared under sheets of sterile, blue cloth.

7:19 a.m., Pediatric OR 4

The doctors cut a curved line across Sarah's stomach, the only visible part of her body. A small wisp of white smoke curled up from the argon-beam coagulator that immediately cauterized each cut. A smell akin to burned hair slowly forced the sterile hydrogen peroxide smell from the room.

Sarah's flesh opened like a mouth, revealing the surface of her liver, a swirl of blacks, browns and sickly shades of red and green on bubbled and pocked tissue. The size of two large grapefruits, it appeared to be the only organ occupying her tiny abdomen.

Dressed in green gowns, masks and gloves as if they had stepped out of a science fiction film, Dr. Magee stood to the right of Sarah, Dr. Pelletier to the left. They studied Sarah's stomach with intensity and began disconnecting the vascular web — vein by vein.

"Sometimes the liver is nice and small, sometimes the liver is kind of big," Dr. Magee said. "We're kind of having to wrestle it out of here."

9:09 a.m., Pediatric OR 4

Dr. Magee reached his hand behind Sarah's toad-skin liver which was held in place by only a few veins.

"So, we're well past the point of going back," he said.

9:30 a.m., Pediatric OR 4

"There's her old liver," Dr. Magee said, lifting the mass of knotted tissue. He looked down at the cavity. "There's a hole where her old liver used to be."

He placed the old liver in a small tray, which was placed carefully on one of the sterile tables like a centerpiece.

After nine minutes, the donor liver was removed from ice and readied for its new body.

10:30 a.m., Mott Children's Hospital, third floor waiting area

Michelle's eyes searched the room and hallway behind it. She, Ron and Baba hadn't heard from doctors or nurses since the family left Sarah in front of the operating suite doors.

"Anxiety," she said, rubbing her eyes. "Every time we hear feet shuffling, is it someone coming to give us news?"

Ron, who lay on the couch next Michelle, and Baba, who slumped in a chair across from her daughter, opened their eyes.

"It's so weird to think she's got a new liver, isn't it?" Michelle asked.

Ron sat up, his attention immediately focused. "It's so surreal. I almost want to go in there."

"You can't," Michelle smiled. "Parents aren't allowed. I can't wrap my head around it to think she's got a new part."

"I know it's real, but ..."

Baba trailed off.



About six hours after making the first incision, the transplant is complete and Dr. John Magee is able to sit for the first time. He compares transplant surgery to a game of chess, in which one must vigilantly anticipate the next move and prepare for any number of potential outcomes. The work, in addition to being physically tiring, can be mentally draining, but early in his career, Dr. Magee was drawn to organ transplant surgery by the challenge of the work.



Sarah's room in the pediatric intensive care unit is filled with monitors that track every vital and bodily function.



Sarah comes out of anesthesia Sunday afternoon, one day after her transplant surgery, to find her stitches are covered with bandages and her hands capped to keep the IVs in place. While in the pediatric intensive care unit, Sarah controls the dispensing of her morphine with the push of a button, which she often refuses to use. Her resistance to the pain medication continued long after her release from the ICU, culminating with her refusing the last two doses of painkillers.



Grandmother Maureen (Baba) Palmer sighs with joyfully relief as Michelle and Ron embrace in the waiting room at Mott Children's Hospital, after receiving word from Dr. John Magee that Sarah's surgery was complete and apparently successful. It would be another hour before the family could see Sarah again.

What sleep they had been able to catch since Sarah went into surgery was dreamless.

"At first when we first came down here, Michelle and I were pretty scared," Ron said. "Reality was closing in around us."

"I cried and I got it out," Michelle said. "I trust the doctors, and I trust the Lord will take care of her."

The humid air of the operating room wrapped itself around everything.

A smooth, rose-colored liver sat in the cavity once occupied by Sarah's leathery black liver. The doctors again worked vein by vein, sewing back each connection they had cut earlier.

Within an hour, the sound of her blood pumping into the

"This is a beautiful liver. None of our livers look that beautiful."

— Dr. John Magee, surgeon

new liver was audible on the Doppler sonar machine.

"See the difference," Dr. Magee instructed.

12:08 p.m., Pediatric OR 4

Residents sewed up the cut in Sarah's flesh, quickly revealing the change: Her once distended belly appeared to have the normal curvature of a 6-year-old's abdomen.

Float nurse Tony White nodded at Sarah, whose abdomen still was her only visible body part. "They're like little grown-ups."

For a half hour, the doctors sewed the incision shut, leaving a seam that frowned above her belly button.

"The liver was a little harder

to get out than average, but the new liver looks good," Dr. Magee said. In fact, the new liver immediately began producing bile. "This is kind of the first big step. The next 24 hours are important. The next three days are important and the next week."

12:51 p.m., Mott Children's Hospital, third floor waiting area

Michelle, Ron and Baba sat at attention, hungry for news, when Dr. Magee entered the waiting area.

"Everything went great," he said, smiling. "No real problems during the operation ... Any questions?"

"How soon will we see a difference in her color," Michelle

asked.

"In the next three days to five days, we'll see a difference," Dr. Magee said.

Michelle smiled.

"It's okay. She's good. She's out," she said. "I don't know whether to laugh or cry."

"I think my heart hurts," Baba said.

Ron looked at his wife, allowing a quick laugh of relief. "I think gray hair weighs more, because my head feels heavy."

12:56 p.m., Pediatric Intensive Care Unit

Sarah lay in her bed while nurse Edward Alderman checked her vitals. In the corner, a filter machine buzzed and hummed as it cleansed the air.

"It's the cleanest environment that can be," Mr. Alderman said.

Michelle peaked her head in with some uncertainty; Ron and Baba stood behind her.

Mr. Alderman beckoned them in.

"Sarah," Michelle began, leaning over her sleeping daughter, "I'm sure you can probably hear me, and I know you're sound asleep, but Daddy's here and Baba's here. You need to get lots of sleep so you get better. They gave you a new liver. Did they tell you?"

"She probably does hear you," Mr. Alderman reassured her.

"She almost looks like a normal kid," Baba said.

"Soon, she'll be pink," Ron added. He looked at the new scar above her belly button. "I can't believe she has an innie now."

Baba reached down and caressed Sarah's forehead.

"What a miracle. What an absolute miracle," she said, beginning to cry. "I haven't cried through the whole thing."

"Well, you picked a silly time to start," Michelle said softly.

Baba smiled, tears streaming down her cheeks. "Well, she's doing good now. I can let my guard down."

May 15, 4:50 p.m., PICU

"Are you hurting?" Michelle asked, sitting next to Sarah's bed, now piled high with stuffed animals. "Where?"

"My belly hurts," Sarah moaned. Michelle reached down and rubbed her daughter's stomach. She planned to stay with Sarah in the hospital until her release while Ron remained at home to take care of Anna and Jacob.

"That's the one plus of having major surgery as a young child: You get spoiled rotten," Michelle teased.

Sarah, the yellow of her skin paling, laid quietly, buried by the gifts on her bed, and watched television. A nasogastric tube entered her nose winding through her body into her stomach to collect excess stomach fluids and IVs capped both hands.

"We're running out of space on your bed, Sarah," Michelle said.

Sarah nodded, signaling her mother to press the button connected to her morphine, an

See SARAH, Page 3C

Health Food Centre
 10% off total purchase with this ad.
 434 N. Telegraph
 Monroe, LA 70118
242-0700
 1000 N. Natchez
 Monroe, LA 70118
 242-0700

Spotlight On:

Foot & Ankle Specialists

Dr. Amy Balettie, Dr. Scott Hughes and Dr. Gregory P. Vogt

SEVER'S DISEASE

Heel pain is common in adults but uncommon in children. A child suffering heel pain may have a growth-related problem called Sever's disease, or calcaneal apophysitis, which typically affects children between ages 10 and 14. When the heel begins developing bone during infancy, bone gradually replaces cartilage in a large portion of the heel. This ossification also occurs at the back of the heel. These two areas are connected by cartilage that allows the bones to grow to full size and eventually fuse, typically around age 16. When this area of growth is disturbed or damaged by overuse or repeated minor trauma, Sever's disease often occurs. Pain during activity is the main symptom.

examinations, conditions such as Sever's disease, flat feet, "toeing in," "toeing out," and other abnormalities can be detected and treated before becoming major and more serious. When parents notice any foot problems their children are experiencing and bring them to the podiatrist for examination, they help ensure their children have all of the benefits that healthy, active feet can give. Patients of all ages can expect comprehensive, quality care from all of us at FOOT & ANKLE SPECIALISTS, P.C. Visit our website at www.monpod.com.

P.S. Cutting back on sporting activities while bones grow may relieve the pain of Sever's disease.

Foot & Ankle Specialists, P.C.
 1060 N. Monroe, Monroe - 734/241-0200
 8085 Secor Rd., Lambertville - 734/856-8900
www.monpod.com

Diabetes Health Days In Monroe

ATTENTION MEDICARE DIABETICS:

Join us at the Diabetes Health Day and you can receive a new **Pain-Free freestyle Glucose Monitor** and be fitted for **Diabetic Shoes**! There is **NO OP FOOT COST**! We bill Medicare for you and with supplemental insurance you may owe **NOTHING AT ALL!!**

Instructors will be on site to teach you how to properly test your blood sugar on places other than your finger! All attendees with Medicare can receive a **new Freestyle Glucose Meter** with **NO OP FOOT COST!**

Walk in extreme comfort and protect your feet with the Medicare approved **Dr. Gen Diabetic Shoe and Tennis Shoe**! All attendees with Medicare can be fitted for one pair of diabetic shoes and **sets of custom molded inserts** with **NO OP FOOT COST!**

Thursday, July 21 & Friday, July 22
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
 (Come by anytime during these hours)
The Frenchtown Dixie Branch Library
Community Room
2881 Nadeau Road
Monroe, MI

FREE Diabetic Socks with every shoe order!!

Sponsored by: Anchor Medical, Inc.
A partner company with the National Diabetes Education Program
 Medicare with supplemental insurance typically covers all costs of testing supplies and diabetic shoes, deductibles and co-pays apply.

FROM PAGE 2C

Sarah (cont.)

action Sarah could, but preferred not to do herself.

"You don't have to hurt to get better," Michelle cooed. "You don't have to talk to me, but you should know, you don't ever have to hurt."

May 17, 2:30 p.m., Mott Children's Hospital, 5-West, Room 514

On her first full day out of the pediatric ICU, Sarah sat up in her bed, her stitches visible, playing Sorry with Baba and a family friend, Angela Firth. When she rolled a number on the dice that meant a move to the other side of the board, Sarah looked at her grandmother for help. She was still tethered to IVs of morphine and saline.

Her hair, dry and matted, was looking less golden, more the familial brown. Her skin retained a pale olive shade.

"Jacob was very, very worried about her," Baba said.

"I can't feel my belly," Sarah whined, itching around the scabbed incision.

Michelle leaned over and gently tickled her. Sarah responded with her bleating laugh.



Despite awakening from general anesthesia the previous day, Sarah remains groggy, swollen and in pain. Her nasogastric tube remains in place until her stomach reawakens from an internal anesthetic and begins to function again. The situation creates even further discomfort. Michelle remains by her daughter's side, stroking her hair to keep her calm.

"Dr. Lopez said she's soaring, she's flying," Michelle said. "She's kicking butt."

"I don't like doctors," Sarah said.

Despite Sarah's feelings, Dr. Lopez had given Michelle good news: Sarah's stay in the hospital might be short.

May 19, noon, Room 514
Sarah's blood work came

back with elevated white blood cells, and bacteria were present in her stool, indicating an infection, meaning Sarah must stay longer. She moved about her room freely, not that most of her IVs were gone. Instead of medicine, a necklace hung from her IV post strung with several large beads, one for each procedure Sarah underwent in the hospital.

Around the room, Sarah's artwork decorated the walls. Paints, crayons and pencils crowded the table her mother attempted to clear for lunch: SpaghettiOs, Sprite, Doritos, cole slaw and string cheese. Despite the prescribed lunch, Sarah's preferred diet remained Doritos, popsicles and Sprite.

Michelle sighed. Sarah didn't even glance at her lunch.

"She's so focused on her art today," Michelle said. She turned to her daughter. "Do you want your cole slaw?"

"Cole slaw? No," Sarah said without looking up from her painting.

"Didn't you just say yes?" Michelle grinned.

"No," Sarah reaffirmed.

"Doritos?" Michelle offered.

"Yes," Sarah answered. "SpaghettiOs? Yes."

Michelle handed her the requested items and opened the string cheese. She pulled off a piece and dangled it in front of her daughter. Sarah reached for it just as Michelle pulled it away, popping it in her own mouth.

"I'm trying, Sarah," she laughed.

See SARAH, Page 4C

SURGEON TEACHES STUDENTS, FAMILIES



DR. JOHN MAGEE

ANN ARBOR — "It's kind of a good thing to not know me too well," Dr. John Magee quipped.

After all, he said, as surgical director of pediatric liver transplantation and attending surgeon at University of Michigan Mott Children's Hospital, Dr. Magee is the kind of doctor patients get to know much better the poorer their surgical outcome or particular health situation.

Dr. Magee began his training at the University of Pennsylvania, studying biology with a concentration in cellular and molecular biology. In 1984, he began his medical degree at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia and joined the University of Michigan team in 1988 as a resident.

"I was always interested in medicine," he said. "I kind of think the focus of the challenge and the need to keep thinking about situations interested me."

He remained at UM until 1991, when he took a research fellowship at the Duke University Medical Center Department of Surgery in Durham, N.C. He returned to UM in 1995. Along the way, he collected numerous awards and honors. Since 1996, he has taught at UM Medical School.

Dr. Magee said his teaching often extends beyond his residents to families.

"You're kind of constantly involved in teaching both

patients and families," he said.

Since he began practicing, he's performed about 150 liver transplants on adults and children in addition to numerous kidney transplants. He said, he's reached peace with the fact that he's in a risk-intensive field.

"If everything's perfect in your life, you shouldn't go into medicine," he added. "Liver transplants, you always ought to have A, B and C ... What happens next may never happen."

He said that's why he never talks to families until surgeries are over.

"You can tell them things are going great, then hang up the phone and you're on plan D."

But at the end of each transplant, he breathes a little easier.

"It's really routine," he said. "But it's still kind of a miracle every time."

Dr. Magee also is surgical director of adult and pediatric kidney transplantation at UM Hospitals. He serves on the Organ Procurement and Transplant Network's pediatric committee, kidney-pancreas-pediatric subcommittee and the liver-pediatric subcommittee, as well as on the Michigan Gift of Life liver and pancreas committee. He has published 54 peer-review articles, among numerous other publications and articles.

— Stacy Kess



Sarah tries her best not to smile as nurse Lori Amos stops in to check on her while she recovers from surgery. Her bandages have been removed, leaving only a series of tape swatches cover the stitches on the incision on her belly as it heals.



When she isn't doing art projects or playing her favorite board game, Sorry, Sarah rests in bed with Duckina, and watches some of her favorite videos.

Drugs in the News™

Booster Vaccine for Whooping Cough Approved

The FDA has approved a new combination vaccine for use by adults and teenagers as a single booster to fight against outbreaks of whooping cough (medical term for this infection is *pertussis*). The new vaccine, which is called *Adacel*, provides additional protection for those who received the pertussis vaccine as a child. In clinical trial, a single dose of Adacel produced protective antibody levels against whooping cough that were comparable to the protection provided by three doses of an older combination vaccine (*Bordetella pertussis* and the toxoids of *diphtheria* and *tetanus*). Health experts indicate that protection afforded during the early years of life after vaccination wears off and makes the person vulnerable to the organism (*Bordetella pertussis*) that causes whooping cough.

This is a highly contagious illness and is capable of causing prolonged missed days at school and work. In the very young who have not been immunized, whooping cough can cause severe coughing and even death associated with pneumonia and respiratory failure.

Dundee Pharmacy Shoppe
"Your Hometown Pharmacy for over 70 years"
115 Riley St., Historic Downtown Dundee
(734) 529-2246 • 800-784-6370
OPEN: Monday 9 - 7:30, Tues. - Fri. 9 - 6, Sat. 9 - 4

Experience The Latest In Digital Hearing Technology
The Office of
Levy & Levy, M.D., P.C.
Office Visits By Appointment!

- No volume controls, whistling or discomfort
- Demonstrations of state-of-the-art digital hearing aid technology
- In-office demonstration of hearing aids available by appointment

Certified Audiologist • Licensed Hearing Aid Dispenser

THE CENTER FOR BETTER HEARING 2246 N. Monroe St. • Monroe, MI 48162
(734) 243-0220

Ryan Meredith
M.A., C.C.C.A., Audiologist
Mon.-Fri. 8-5
Selected Saturdays by appointment

EMBARRASSED By Your Tattoo?
Laser tattoo removal can help!

Our advanced Palomar Q-YAG 5TM Laser can remove a wide range of tattoos from virtually any body area. Treatments are quick, comfortable, and non-invasive. Call us today to schedule a consultation and learn more!

Palomar QYAG 5

Frustrated by Unwanted Hair?
Help is on the way!

The Palomar MediluxTM Pulsed Light System removes hair comfortably and safely, with long lasting results. It can clear the hair from your back or legs in under 30 minutes and treat smaller areas in even less time. Call today for more information!

Palomar MEDILUX

Under the direction of
H. George Levy M.D.P.C.
2246 N. Monroe St., Monroe, MI 48162
Call 734-243-0220
for your Free Consultation

Do you have back pain, arthritis pain, headaches, arm or leg pain?

Relief is Here.

HEALTH DAY
Tuesday, July 26, 2005
1:00 pm - 6:00 pm
FREE PAIN ANALYSIS
Free Structural Screening
Free Blood Pressure Check
Refreshments • Prizes • Drawings
Walk-ins • Appointments • All Ages

Rehabilitation Specialists
Keith Barbour, D.O. • Reuben Henderson, D.O.
Ateeq K. Rehman, M.D.

Call: 734-241-0560
876 Stewart Road, Suite D, Monroe, MI 48162

FROM PAGE 3C

Sarah (cont.)

Sarah, unfazed, continued painting.

"You're feeling good, aren't you?" Michelle asked.

"Yes. No. No. Yes," Sarah said, giggling.

"I think I'm still processing Saturday," Michelle said.

Sarah looked up. "What do you mean?"

"That you had a liver transplant." Michelle said.

"Why?" Sarah prodded.

"Because it still feels like you're sick," Michelle said, forcing the last word out. "In some ways, you are."

"What?" Sarah teased.

"Sick," Michelle answered.

Sarah grinned mischievously. "Six?"

"Well, no, sick," Michelle said.

Sarah shook her head. "No, I'm not."

Michelle hugged her daughter and the two laughed.

"I think they fiddled with your brains while you were in there," Michelle giggled.

"Yup," Sarah nodded.

"Yup," Michelle repeated.

"A silly brain," Sarah explained.

"A silly liver?" Michelle asked.

"A silly brain," Sarah repeated.



Michelle, Sarah, IV pole in tow, and her grandfather, Don Cleveland, head back to Sarah's fifth-floor room after getting an ultrasound. Outside her air-purified room, Sarah must wear a mask to avoid germs because her immune system is suppressed to control her body's reaction to the foreign liver.



A week after Sarah was first admitted to the hospital, initial tests suggested Sarah was almost ready for discharge. But blood work, an ultrasound and other tests suggested otherwise. The news prompts Michelle to check out of the room she rented at the UM Hospital's on-campus hotel, which she used only once since checking in 5 days earlier. She admits the constant vigil beside her daughter's bedside is emotionally and physically draining.



"Can't we take a nap," jokes Michelle as she rests on Sarah's bed. Michelle has been at Mott since the night before the surgery, spending almost every night with her daughter.

With a mask over her nose and mouth, Sarah sat on Michelle's lap in a wheelchair on the way to an ultrasound — one of the deciding factors in how soon Sarah would go home. Outside Sarah's hospital room, she wore a mask to avoid infection from germs in the hospital.

The ultrasound unit was quiet, except for the occasional click of the ultrasound machine and the audio-feed of blood rushing through her system.

"Mom," Sarah whispered, her discomfort audible.

About half an hour later, physician's assistant Charles Moore delivered the news. Sarah looked fine, but the infection would keep her in the hospital over the weekend on a course of oral antibiotics and oral vitamin K to help battle the illness.

"We're doing okay," he said.

"All right," Michelle encouraged. "Did you here that? You're here until Monday. This is a good thing."

Sarah sighed. "I can handle three days."

2:30 p.m., University of Michigan Hospital, MedInn

With the prospect of at least three more days, Michelle decided to check out of the MedInn, the in-hospital hotel for patients' families.

"I haven't stayed there at all since she was in the ICU,"

Michelle said, adding that she slept next to Sarah on the hospital bed in her room. "I've just used it for storage."

It was a rare moment away from Sarah.

The bed, still made, was buried under a pile of clothes.

Michelle picked up a copy of the Ann Arbor News lying on the bed.

"Day of the transplant," she said, pausing.

She shook her head and began packing her bags.

"I saw a mom this morning... and she had her hair done and her make-up on and I thought, man, this must be your first day (as a hospital mom)," she said. "That doesn't happen for me."

She slung her bags over her shoulder headed back up to Sarah's room to settle in for the weekend...

For most of Sarah's stay at Mott Children's Hospital, her movement was restricted to her room and to various testing units such as the ultrasound room. Having not been outside in about a week, Sarah stares out the window, watching the construction work underway on another wing of the hospital complex.

"I saw a mom this morning... and she had her hair done and her make-up on and I thought, man, this must be your first day."

— Michelle Gravel, Sarah's mother

BY THE NUMBERS

5 hours 55 minutes

Time from the initial incision until Sarah was released from the operating room to the intensive care unit

1

Unit of packed red blood cell received by Sarah during surgery

3

Units of fresh frozen plasma received by Sarah during surgery

800

Milliliters of Sarah's blood lost during surgery

150

Transplants Dr. John Magee estimates he has performed

85.3 to 88.1

Percentage of liver transplant patients surviving one year after transplant

LIVER AND LIFE

The liver plays a number of roles in a healthy body, including:

- Storing iron, vitamin and mineral reserves.
- Storing sugar, carbohydrates and fat for energy.
- Making bile, a digestive juice.
- Making clotting factor.
- Making growth protein.
- Detoxifying poisons including alcohol, drugs, foods and the chemicals in the air.
- Helping the body destroy germs it encounters.

Source: American Liver Foundation, www.liverfoundation.org

Eye Care One

"Distinctively Different"

Formerly Superior Eye Associates

Glasses while you wait!

Eye Exams • Contacts

504 N. Telegraph Rd.,
Monroe, MI

Call today to make an appointment.
Evening and Weekend appoints also available.
Walk-ins welcome.

(734) 243-2020

Owned and operated by Dr. Douglas W. Baltrip

Most Insurances Accepted

Want only the best for your family?

Then come to the experts!

Serving Monroe County for 58 YEARS! 1948-2005

Cooler 58¢
Reverse Osmosis 58¢
Softener 58¢

Only 58¢ per month for the 1st 3 months!

Certain restrictions and credit criteria apply. Call for details.

3259 Lewis Ave., Ida, MI
(734) 269-2067
(800) 628-8977

Hours: Mon. - Fri. 8-5; Sat. 8-1:30

Culligan

Trust the Water Experts®

The Talking Bottle

Rex

New at Weisel Clinic Pharmacy

The Talking Medication Bottle is designed to assist persons with visual impairments or an inability to understand printed instructions. When a patient first receives a new prescription, they will read the full label text. The patient presses a button to hear the label information.

for more info, call 734-586-7501

Weisel Clinic Pharmacy

7505 Grafton Road
Newport, Michigan 48166
Open Mon. - Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-2
www.weiselnrx.com

Rex

Find Sarah on the Net

Find the first three parts of Sarah's Second Chance and an audio and photo presentation at www.monroepublishing.com/sarahsstory. The Gravels' online family journal of Sarah's experience is available at www.caringbridge.org/mi/sarah.



Doctor: Living wills confusing

Dr. Ferdinando Mirarchi, a Western Pennsylvania emergency room physician, said that living wills, which are not legally recognized in Michigan but often used to supplement the state's accepted do-not-resuscitate form and power of attorney for health care form, are misinterpreted by medical staff 99.9 percent of the time because they are written in legal terms, not medical terms. Living wills legally are recognized in 48 states and used by medical personnel in those states to guide care decisions.

Your Health

A guide to better living through fitness, medicine, diet and wellness

section
C
THE MONROE
EVENING NEWS
TUESDAY
JULY 26, 2005

Stacy Kess, health editor
phone: 240-5762
e-mail: stacyk@monroenews.com

The Monroe Evening News



Michelle Gravel (center) reviews the large bags of medications and other medical supplies with nurse Lori Amos while the family prepares for Sarah's discharge from UM Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor.

A new life at home

Six-year-old Sarah Gravel, recovering from a liver transplant, is released from the hospital to a different world than she knew before.

STORY BY STACY KESS ■ PHOTOS BY KIM BRENT

It only took two hours for a liver to become available for 6-year-old Sarah Gravel, who had spent most of her life with a liver torn apart by neonatal hepatitis. Doctors transplanted a healthy liver into her abdomen during a six-hour procedure. The recovery process also seemed to move quickly — until tests indicated she had an infection.

Sarah's mother, Michelle Gravel, remained by her daughter's side throughout the recovery, while her father, Ron Gravel, stayed at home in Monroe caring for her brother, Jacob, and sister, Anna. Sarah's grandmother, Maureen (Baba) Palmer, visited as often as her schedule would allow. As the days passed, Sarah continued her campaign to return home in time for Anna's third birthday May 26.

A Monroe Evening News reporter and photographer documented Sarah's homecoming and transition into her new life.

3:30 p.m. May 25, C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, Ann Arbor, fifth floor west, Room 514

"Don't worry," Michelle said, smiling at her husband. "I'm not going to forget anything."

Just after 2 p.m., the nurse told Michelle that she and Sarah were going home. Ron already was on his way for a visit and arrived about 3 p.m. to good news and a room buried in cardboard boxes, blue bags labeled "Patient Belongings," stuffed animals and Sarah's artwork.

Sarah pushed another stuffed animal into an already-brimming box, closing the lid as best she could. She grabbed a marker and looked up inquisitively. "How do you spell 'animals?'"

Ron rattled off the answer: "ANIMALS."

Sarah danced around the room, laughing. Although the tubes remained in her hands, she was not attached to any IVs. It wouldn't be long before those, too, were gone. Each step forward was a step closer to home.

"So long as I can sleep in a people bed and eat people food," Michelle said, sighing. "I was really hoping she could at least get out today. I mean, Anna has no clue it's her birthday (tomorrow), but we do."

Sarah especially was aware of that fact, spending much of her time drawing pictures, painting carved wood animals

See SARAH, Page 2C



While the family awaits final discharge paperwork and removal of Sarah's remaining IV lines, Ron and Sarah (above) play together in the arts and crafts room, one of the few places Sarah enjoyed in the hospital. Nurse Lori Amos, Sarah's first and last nurse at Mott Hospital, waves goodbye (below) as the Gravels leave the fifth floor ward for their Monroe home. Sarah must wear a mask for protection from germs until she is out of the hospital.



SARAH'S SECOND CHANCE

July 5 — Part 1: On the waiting list

July 12 — Part 2: The night before

July 19 — Part 3:

A new liver, a new lease

Today — Part 4: A new life at home

FROM PAGE 1C

Sarah (cont.)

and setting aside stickers for her little sister, which she stuffed in boxes and bags around the room. She declared herself done with packing and escorted her father to the arts-and-crafts room next to her hospital room.

"We came with a duffel bag," Michelle said. "I'm just so glad to be leaving ... We've been together so much through all her illness. She's always by my side. Maybe it was just reconfirming she's silly and she's sweet and way too smart."

She paused. "I learned how strong she is."

In the arts-and-crafts room, Sarah sat opposite her father at a short table, making her dad appear like a giant. She slapped paint on a star, part of a project that involved most of the children in the ward in celebrating the "American Idol" finale.

Ron watched her, smiling serenely.

"I've realized how important she is and how bad it would be if she wasn't around," he said. "I've realized how important I actually am to her."

Michelle sat down next to her husband, the packing in Sarah's room finished. "I've put myself aside for the whole week. There hasn't been 'self' since last Friday."

5 p.m., Mott Hospital, fifth floor west, Room 514

Bottle by bottle, a nurse handed Michelle Sarah's medications from a large bag.

"Holy cow," Michelle gasped.

Ron's eyes widened. "Oh my gosh. Sarah's pharmacy."

In all, Sarah was instructed to take 14 medications — 10 pills and four liquids — each day to help her body adjust to the transplant. In all, she would take 20 doses a day. Although many of the medications will be tapered off eventually, she always will remain on anti-rejection drugs and a regimen to ensure the foreign liver functions in Sarah's body.

"Look at this, Sarah," Michelle cooed. "This is all for one little 6-year-old girl."

"I don't want a lot of medicine," Sarah pleaded.

After nearly 10 minutes of discharge instructions, the nurse turned to Sarah with the words she had waited to hear: "We need to take that IV out, Sarah."

After a moment of struggling with the well-taped IV, Sarah was free, sporting a new Looney Toons Tasmanian Devil bandage on her hand.

"Sarah," nurse Lori Amos announced, "You get to leave."

With a pale yellow mask covering her nose and mouth to protect her from germs, Sarah marched out of the hospital room she had occupied for more than a week, her parents following with boxes and bags.

6:04 p.m., US-23 South, Ann Arbor

"I like it when we're not in the hospital," Sarah said as the gray Ford Taurus borrowed from Michelle's father rumbled down the freeway, brimming with artwork made by Sarah during her recovery.

"Me, too," Michelle agreed.

Sarah repeated the sentiments to Baba over the cell phone. When the conversation ended, she declared herself bored and began another drawing.

6:36 p.m., I-275, exit 2, Ash Township.

Sarah squealed with excitement as the car turned south on Telegraph Rd. toward Monroe and the family's apartment.

"We're closer," she cried.

"Yeah, we're getting closer," Michelle said.

Sarah pointed to each passing landmark, cheering, "Yay."

"Just think, last Friday when we left, it was all dark and rainy, and now it's sunny and warm," Michelle said.

"Is it almost summer?" Sarah wondered aloud, then quickly returned her attention to the signs of home.

"Excited?" Michelle inquired. Sarah responded with a nod.

"Me, too," Michelle said, yawning.

At 6:45 p.m., the family pulled into their apartment complex off Stewart Rd.

Sarah looked at the rows of tidy brick town houses. "It seems like I've been gone so long."



With Ron leading the way, Sarah and Michelle walk hand-in-hand out of UM Mott Children's Hospital, where the two had spent nearly a week and a half after her liver transplant surgery.



Sarah talks on the phone with her Baba, her grandmother Maureen Palmer, as the family pulls out of the University of Michigan Hospital complex, finally heading for home.



When the family arrives home, the three Gravel children, Jacob, Sarah and Anna, immediately join together in a "welcome home" hug, as their great-grandmother (left) and grandfather Don Cleveland watch.

“ Get well Sarah, feel better Sarah. I miss you.”

— Afternoon kindergarten class, Raisinville Elementary School

6:55 p.m., Gravel home, Stewart Rd., Frenchtown Township

For almost a week and a half, the apartment had been quiet. Within minutes of Sarah's arrival, it filled with noise and excitement as Sarah, Jacob and Anna joined in an impromptu celebration.

Sarah quickly read through a colorful pile of construction paper cards sent by her kindergarten class.

"Get well Sarah, feel better Sarah," she read. "I miss you."

"You have a boyfriend, you have a boyfriend," Jacob sang, dancing around his sister.

"Anna, I have a present," Sarah called.

Anna clapped her hands and cried out with excitement.

"Rocks," Sarah explained, handing her a bag of clay beads.

She picked up a painted wood cutout of a pig. "Anna, I have another present for you. A pig."

"My pig," Anna exclaimed, her voice rising with excitement. "Thank you, Sarah."

The presents continued, some for Jacob and most for Anna. When the distant song of the ice cream truck was detected, Anna's and Jacob's squeals snuck in between the noise of conversation. Sarah quietly asked for ice cream, a little uncertain in a situation she had not seen for nearly two weeks.

"It's been so quiet around here," Ron said with a strained smile. He had attempted to keep the house spotless while Sarah was in the hospital, but the living room already had disappeared under drawings, toys and homemade greeting cards. "It will (return to normal) shortly."

"Mama, please," Jacob pleaded as the ice cream truck grew nearer.

"It's coming," Anna gasped.

"Yeah, it's back to normal." Ron chuckled. "Situation normal: out of control. I'm just glad to have them home. I just kind of realized how important I am to her."



With her activity still restricted, Sarah often spends time indoors, playing and watching videos, such as the 3-D movie she and her brother, Jacob, watched one afternoon in early June.

He leaned back in the armchair, looked over Michelle and smiled, then looked back at Sarah, who had joined her sister and brother in the window

anxiously awaiting the ice cream truck. "Before, I thought it was just Michelle and Sarah, but I'm a part of it too."

See SARAH, Page 3C



Caring for your heart health

MERCY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL SYSTEM
M
Cardiac & Pulmonary Rehab
901 North Macomb Street
(734) 240-5301

Remodeling and Home Improvement
Quality, Innovation and Performance Excellence
Contact Dean at...

DEAN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY
(734)384-5691 Mobile (586)291-1894

- Kitchen & Bath
- Interior Finishing
- Windows & Doors
- Additions
- Deck & Patio
- Garage
- Electrical

Licensed Builder Contractor ★ E-mail: deanbodine@aol.com

LET US ENTERTAIN YOU!

Win an iPod Mini!

If you're looking for places to go, things to do and people to see... look no further than The Monroe Evening News.

Enter to win dinner and movie tickets in a monthly drawing. Grand prize winner will receive an iPod mini.

Simply fill out the entry form and mail to address listed below.

For more details visit www.monroenews.com

• No purchase necessary to enter; copies of The Monroe Evening News are available at the county libraries or visit www.monroenews.com.
• Contest will run May 1 through July 31, 2005.
• Employees of the Monroe Publishing Co. and their immediate family members are not eligible to win.

Entry deadline: Aug. 5, 2005

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____

Mail completed entry form to:
The Monroe Evening News, Attn: Entertainment Contest
P.O. Box 1176, Monroe, MI 48161-9958



Once the family was settled on the night of Sarah's homecoming, their initial hugs and kisses exchanged, Sarah read through a stack of well-wishing cards made by classmates in her kindergarten class at Raisinville Elementary School.



As the children's bedtime approaches on Sarah and Michelle's first night home from the hospital, Michelle and Ron talk in the kitchen. Michelle looks through the large bags of medication — 14 in all, each taken at least once a day totalling about 20 doses — and tries to organize the schedule to administer each of them.

“ I've realized how important she is and how bad it would be if she wasn't around. I've realized how important I actually am to her.”

— Ron Gravel, Sarah's dad



The day after returning home from the hospital, Sarah bolted out the door when she heard the familiar song of the ice cream truck, which she had watched longingly the night before through the window. A neighborhood friend scooped Sarah up, with her arm around Sarah's stomach, to take Sarah back to Michelle. Michelle ran toward them, alarmed about the contact with Sarah's stitches. Michelle reveals Sarah's taped stitches and explains to the neighborhood children (clockwise from top left) Ashlyn Miller, 6, Kionna Richards, 8, William Miller, 5, and Kiara Allen, 6, that they must be careful when playing with her daughter while her stomach heals.

FROM PAGE 2C

Sarah (cont.)

2:40 p.m. June 8, Gravel home

Sarah wandered around her bedroom.

“It was fun coming home, because I don't want to stay at the hospital,” she said, picking up a stuffed animal, examining it and setting it down.

“I got a bad (liver) and it was too bad. I was yellow,” she said.

She held her arms out in front of her stomach. “My belly was like that big.”

“I don't like being yellow... because the other kids made fun of me on the bus.” She stopped in front of her pink plastic storage bins and looked up thoughtfully. “They did. I just ignored them.”

She pulled out a coloring book, “It's Good To Be Me: The Story of My Transplant.” The book asked her to tell about her feelings. “Different,” she answered it in red marker.

“My life is,” she began in purple, then switched to yellow, “different.” In blue, she added, “And it's funny that I have a new liver.”

She looked up from her colorful essay to explain: “I'm so used to having a bad liver.”

3:30 p.m., Gravel home

The Gravels' kitchen was filled with boxes of T-shirts, all printed with the slogan “Don't take your organs to heaven, heaven knows we need them here.” Although Sarah's surgery was three weeks in the past, the family's fundraising effort continued with T-shirt sales and collection jars at local businesses. Baba, bubbling with ideas and energy,

remained the mastermind behind the fundraisers. She and other family members planned to sell T-shirts for \$10 at the Redford Township Festival.

“We're promoting organ-donor awareness,” Baba said. “I think a lot of people just have no idea. People think ... it costs money to donate. There's no cost. You're giving of yourself.”

Sarah's daily life had less to do with fundraisers and more to do with medication. Medication maintained her new liver, which, according to all tests, was working well. Her stitches were nearly healed. She had taken off her own bandages weeks earlier, leaving a brown frown of a scar on

her now-flat belly. Her skin had taken on a healthy pink hue and her hair had begun shedding the silver and gold highlights brought on by the jaundice with which she once had lived.

Sarah's personality had begun to change, too. Although often silly around her family, she once had refused to talk in front of strangers. After coming home, she became vocal and loud, much more like other children her age. She adopted new fashion sense, too, begging her mother for only the trendiest clothing when the two went to buy clothes that fit Sarah's new body.

While Sarah played with her siblings, Michelle and her

mother rested at the kitchen table.

“I said I thought her liver came from a funny little girl who is really into fashion,” Michelle said after an afternoon of swimming with her three children.

“She's an absolute nutcase now,” Baba nodded. “She's just on all the time.”

Personality changes in transplant patients are possible, according to Sarah's surgeon, Dr. John Magee. Sarah's body was working well and acting healthy for the first time. She was taking prescription steroids and finally had a non-jaundiced appearance. Any such situation could have caused changes in her.

“She's just extra silly,” Baba

said. “Extra giggly.”

“They lowered her steroid level yesterday,” Michelle said, throwing her arms up in a silent cheer.

“She's never known anything but being sick,” Baba said. “I think it's like all of a sudden she's just a normal kid.”

4:30 p.m. July 1, Claire's Boutique, Frenchtown Square mall

“I'm going to get pink flow-

ers,” Sarah announced from her perch on a bench outside Claire's Boutique.

The pink flowers marked a milestone in her recovery. Sarah's body was healthy enough for her ears to be pierced, a procedure that had been put off until July to give her time to heal enough to allow two new wounds, which would be an infection risk.

See SARAH, Page 4C

PANCONI'S AUTO

Jon, our head technician is always here to service all your mechanical needs.

OIL, FILTER & LUBE SPECIAL \$12.95 Expires 8/3/05
Waste disposal fee \$2.00

- Tire Rotation with Oil Change Only \$5.00
- Up To 5 Quarts • 22 Point Safety Inspection
- Complete Brake Inspection
- Check Antifreeze/ All Fluids
- Test Battery and Charging System

10% OFF On All Transmission Service & Rebuilds Expires 8/3/05

Quality Service From A Name You Can Trust

2044 S. Custer • 240-2774 (3/4 Mile West of Telegraph) Mon. - Fri. 8-5 • Sat. 9-Noon

MasterCard VISA

Experience The Latest In Digital Hearing Technology

The Office of Levy & Levy, M.D., P.C. Office Visits By Appointment!

Ryan Meredith M.A., CCC-A, Audiologist

- No volume controls, whistling or discomfort
- Demonstrations of state-of-the-art digital hearing aid technology
- In-office demonstration of hearing aids available by appointment

Certified Audiologist • Licensed Hearing Aid Dispenser

2246 N. Monroe St. • Monroe, MI 48162 (734) 243-0220

Mon-Fri. 8-5 Selected Saturdays by appointment

EMBARRASSED By Your Tattoo?

Laser tattoo removal can help!

Our advanced Palomar Q-YAG 5™ Laser can remove a wide range of tattoos from virtually any body area. Treatments are quick, comfortable, and non-invasive. Call us today to schedule a consultation and learn more!

Palomar QYAG 5™

Frustrated by Unwanted Hair?

Help is on the way!

The Palomar Medilux™ Pulsed Light System removes hair comfortably and safely, with long lasting results. It can clear the hair from your back or legs in under 30 minutes and treat smaller areas in even less time. Call today for more information!

Palomar MEDI LUX™

Under the direction of: **H. George Levy M.D.P.C.**
2246 N. Monroe St. Monroe, MI 48162
Call 734-243-0220 for your Free Consultation

Stop in for the health of it.

Health Food Centre

10% off total purchase w/this ad. Regular priced items only. 1511 N. Telegraph in the Monroe Mall 242-0700

Locally owned since 1977
M-F: 9:00-7:00
Sat: 9:00-6:00
Sun: 12:00-5:00

MasterCard VISA

1-HOUR PIT STOP TIRE SERVICE. GUARANTEED.

FREE Digital Camera!

Pot Hole Special FREE Alignment Check OFFER EXPIRES 7/30/05

Super Special 25% OFF Any Mechanical Service *MAXIMUM DISCOUNT \$25 NO OTHER DISCOUNTS APPLY - OFFER EXPIRES 8/13/05

Oil Change Get our \$33.98 service For Only **\$12** Oil Change & Tire Rotation 5W20; 5W30; or 10W30 Included Includes FREE Inspection *Most Cars & Light Trucks **Plus Environmental Fee, Plus Sales Tax NO OTHER DISCOUNTS APPLY - EXPIRES 8/13/05

WHEN YOU BUY ANY 4 TIRES 30 DAY RIDE GUARANTEE *While supplies last. Find More Coupons @ thetireman.com

Joe Lake TIREMAN

STORE HOURS MON-FRI 7:30-6:00 SAT 7:30-3:00

AUTO SERVICE CENTERS 1986 North Telegraph Road - Just North Of Meijer **241-6686** TOLL FREE 800-498-6009



While the children play upstairs, Michelle takes advantage of some down time to continue work on the donation jars that she and her mother leave with local businesses. The family work to help defray expenses related to Sarah's medical care is an ongoing project for the Gravel's.



Sarah turns to make another run down the sidewalk as she takes her first bike ride since her surgery. Doctors initially restricted her activity, afraid of excess stress on her body, belly and healing stitches. Seven weeks after the transplant, Sarah is finally allowed to enjoy typical childhood activities.



Sarah plays in the toy chest at the Blue Bush Branch Library as Michelle reads to Anna. The Gravel children love to read and visit the library several times a week. Prior to her surgery, Sarah declared that she wanted to become a librarian someday.

FROM PAGE 3C

Sarah (cont.)

"I'm going to sit on Daddy's lap," she said, but her attention shifted quickly to the next exciting piece of news. "We got a van today."

After months of borrowing Michelle's father's car, the family finally had raised and saved enough money to buy a used van to transport Sarah and her siblings to the University of Michigan for Sarah's doctor appointments.

Sarah watched intently as two Claire's employees readied the equipment to pierce her ears. There would be other milestones to come: a first bicycle ride since her surgery, reductions in medications, six-month and one-year checkups. She sank into Ron's lap as he sat on the tall stool at the entrance to Claire's.

"We need you to hold really, really still," the store manager told Sarah, holding the piercing gun up to a tiny dot on her ear.

"One, two." The piercing guns clicked, pressing small pink jewels into Sarah's ears. "All done."

8 p.m. July 18, Gravel home

As Sarah took her night medicine, Michelle noticed something was wrong: Sarah's skin was warm to the touch and she had a headache. When the thermometer read 102 degrees Fahrenheit, Michelle called UM Mott Children's Hospital. She was instructed to bring Sarah into the emergency room.

9:55 a.m. July 20, Mott Children's Hospital, 5-West, Room 5682

Sarah sat on her hospital bed, her legs crossed underneath her pink-checked My Little Pony hospital gown. She colored and chatted as if nothing had happened — not the

return to Mott Hospital, not her fever spiking to 104.5 degrees the night before.

"It's only 100 today," Michelle calmly explained. "To me, that's not even a fever."

"And I threw up," Sarah volunteered.

Sarah's left hand was hidden under a mess of tape and IV tubes leading to a bag of potassium chloride hanging from an IV pole high above. Her arm lay useless at her side, taped to a board to stabilize her hand and prevent the tubes from moving.

"As long as it's not her liver," Michelle added, ever stoic in the face of her daughter's health tribulations. "I mean, I'd rather her not be sick, but ..."

She trailed off and watched her daughter giggle and play.

Once again the family was dispersed across southeast Michigan: Sarah and Michelle in Ann Arbor; Anna and Jacob at Baba's house and Ron alone in the family's Monroe home when not on the road to or from his new job in Toledo.

The quiet at home was hard on Ron, who worried and waited, thinking of the previous week when Sarah had learned to ride her bicycle without training wheels and had proudly completed a stack of second-grade flash cards. He called early in the morning to check on Sarah and Michelle and called again just before 11 a.m.

"Mama, I want to go home," Sarah announced

when Dr. Najeeb Zouri entered the room.

"So do I," he told her.

He explained that her fever was gone, but he was ordering several nasal and blood cultures, a task that would fall to a nurse who would have to battle Sarah's screams of discomfort. The cultures would look for viruses and bacteria and allow doctors determine how to best treat Sarah. In the meantime, she would continue to take three antibiotics.

"Mama, I want to go home," Sarah repeated.

"No," Dr. Zouri insisted. "You're going to go home, but maybe tomorrow."

11 a.m. July 21, Room 5682

Although all the cultures came back negative for both viruses and bacteria, Sarah's fever returned to 101.5 degrees. She was ordered to stay in the hospital until she remained feverless for at least 24 hours.

Friday night, after doctors had written new orders for medications and blood work throughout the day, the order was given to let Sarah go home. Her body temperature had remained normal throughout the day and her other symptoms, including a cough and headache also were gone. With a final diagnosis of viral pneumonia, Sarah was released at 7:30 p.m.

She has not returned to the hospital since.



Sarah looks on warily as nurse Keri Spiker prepares materials to take a nasal culture after a high fever and trouble breathing bring Sarah and Michelle back to Mott Hospital for several days. Although her tests for bacterial and viral infection came back negative, Sarah had to remain in the hospital until her temperature maintained a normal range for 24 hours.



WANTED

Back-to-School PHOTOS!

Monroe Publishing Company is in need of snapshot pictures of Monroe County Kids going back-to-school. One lucky photo will be featured on the front cover of Monroe County Parent Back-To-School edition, a special bi-monthly supplement of The Monroe Evening News and Bedford Now. Other photos will be featured within Monroe County Parent.

So what are you waiting for? Cut the entry form out and tape it to the back of your photo and send it in!

All photos must be mailed or delivered to: Monroe Publishing Company by **Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2005.**

MP Co.
Monroe Publishing Company

Back-to-School Photo Contest
The Monroe Evening News
20 W. First Street
P.O. Box 1176
Monroe, MI 48161

Photo Entry Form

Name of Person Submitting Photo: _____
 Name(s) of Kid(s) in Photo: _____

 Relationship to the Kid(s): _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 Signature: _____

By signing this form, I consent that Monroe Publishing Company may reproduce my submitted photo. All photos submitted may not be featured and may be used at a later date. No professional photos will be accepted. All photos must be mailed or delivered to Monroe Publishing Company by Tuesday, Aug 2, 2005.

MP Co. Monroe Publishing Company

Yaeger's Semi-Annual

SHOE SALE



All Men's & Women's Shoes & Sandals

All On Racks For Easy Selection!

~~20% off*~~

NOW **30% off***



Yaeger's Shoes

1271 N. Telegraph Rd.
Hampton Plaza - 241-5090
Daily 10-6; Sat. 10-5; Closed Sunday



*Excludes previous purchases

We took care of your heating concerns during the winter, now let us keep you cool this summer.

Feel good about the way you cool your home.

- Free estimates
- 24-hour emergency service
- Residential & Commercial
- Factory-trained technicians
- Licensed, Bonded, Fully Insured



Comfort
AIR CONDITIONING & HEATING CO.

15373 S. Telegraph
Monroe
242-2458

