



# Will's Story

## Grateful for the Gift of Life

In March 2009, Josh and Shelley Andrews of Madison were cautiously optimistic after their little boy, Will, had just received a new liver. Their son needed a transplant because a rare disease known as biliary atresia was wreaking havoc on the ducts that normally allow bile to drain from the liver.

"We were so relieved after waiting a year for a liver to become available," remembers Shelley. "Then, we were hit with another blow."

The blow was a blood clot that began to destroy Will's new liver. A series of complications and infections soon dashed Josh and Shelley's sense of hope.

"I remember thinking I could not go through another year of waiting for another liver," says Shelley. "But then he went back on the waiting list and another liver came up after just one month. He had his second transplant in August 2009, and so far, the second time has been the charm."

Says Josh about the care at American Family Children's Hospital, "Everyone seems to care not only about your child, but your entire family. We knew Will was in good hands, and the support Shelley and I received just means everything when your child's life is on the line."

"It is extremely rewarding," says UW Health Transplant Surgeon Anthony D'Alessandro, MD, "when you see a child as sick as Will become perfectly normal."

"To see him run around like a normal boy makes us very happy," says Shelley.

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# Shai's Story

## An Incredible Turnaround

Tami Linne of Decorah, Iowa was not sure she would see her 12-year-old daughter Shai turn 13 after learning that Shai was diagnosed with a rare, rapidly growing abdominal tumor known as undifferentiated sarcoma.

"It was September 2009 and Shai had some very severe stomach pains," says Tami. "Before we knew it, Shai was being scheduled for surgery at Gundersen Lutheran in La Crosse. Once they opened her up, her tumor turned out to be much larger and more complex than they thought."

"Dr. (Mark) Saxton at Gundersen calmed our fears, saying he was very confident that Dr. Dennis Lund at American Family Children's Hospital in Madison would be the right pediatric surgeon to operate on a tumor like Shai's. I put my trust in both doctors, because my daughter's life was hanging in the balance."

"So, in March 2010, Dr. Lund and Dr. Weber (a UW Health oncology surgeon) operated on Shai together and they completely removed her tumor."

"I remember sitting in the waiting area and then when Dr. Lund came out of surgery and told us so nonchalantly that they removed the whole tumor, I just cried for joy. In fact, the surgery went so well that radiation therapy was no longer needed."

"Shai is still getting chemotherapy in La Crosse, but we are forever grateful for the path that led us to Madison. We had a lot of people praying for us and a lot of prayers were answered in large part because of the doctors available to us there."

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# Joe's Story

## Battling Every Challenge

**A**my and Bill Browne know what it means to take things one at a time. Their 13-year-old son, Joe, was born 16 weeks early, weighing less than two pounds. As Amy explains, the list of Joe's complications was often overwhelming.

"Joe's first four and a half months of life were spent in intensive care," Amy says. "During that time, we learned that he was born with mild retardation and cerebral palsy. He did not even speak until he was 3."

"By age 4," Amy says, "Joe was diagnosed with a soft-tissue cancer called Rhabdomyosarcoma. He received chemotherapy for 18 months and during his treatment, he also had a stroke. So, this meant he had to learn how to talk and eat all over again."

"When Joe was 5, we started coming to American Family Children's Hospital. Despite the two-hour drive each way, we found a higher level of expertise when it came to having Joe's shunt revisions. These are neurosurgical procedures to help treat a condition in which fluid accumulates in the brain, and Joe has already needed more than 50 shunt revisions."

"The care team in Madison always explains things very well, and before anything is decided, they make sure that we as parents are involved in the action plan. Over the years, his general health has become more stable and we are so pleased to see him get stronger as he gets older."

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# Andrew's Story

## A Precious Life Saved

**I**t was a Sunday afternoon in April 2010 when Scott Rao and his wife Carol Decker of Wisconsin Dells were in Madison shopping for an outdoor play set for their twin children, Andrew and Logan.

Suddenly, Andrew began crying out in great pain, and then started vomiting on the way home.

After a stop at a local emergency room, doctors suspected Andrew had an obstructed bowel, and urged that he be rushed to American Family Children's Hospital in Madison. When he arrived, Andrew was immediately taken to the operating room, where he appeared very close to death.

There, pediatric surgeon-in-chief Dennis Lund, MD, discovered a bowel obstruction caused by a twisted small intestine. Andrew ultimately required two more operations and lost about half of his small intestine because of the twist. Things were very touch-and-go, but Andrew eventually recovered. Despite some nutritional challenges, Andrew is doing well and "is

now your average 2-year-old kid – curious, ornery, funny and pulling his sister's hair," says Carol.

"We really consider Andrew our medical miracle," she says. "Dr. Lund and everyone at American Family Children's Hospital saved our little boy."

Scott, who is general manager of Christmas Mountain Village resort in Wisconsin Dells, says the children's hospital mirrors his own approach to customer service.

"Everything is designed around the family's needs," Scott says. "The doctors and staff do not have private conversations about your child without involving the parents. We just felt incredibly confident about his care at this wonderful facility."

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