

Natalie Anderson
Grade 10
Fossil Ridge Highschool
nand3525@gmail.com
Kathryn Rude

Wrapping the bandages around his head, I focus on my task while he looks in the mirror. “I’m fine, I don’t need to go to the hospital. I don’t need stitches,” my dad adamantly complained.

“Dad, I can’t put a solid bandaid on the back of your head, and you’re gushing blood. I can’t fix this by myself,” I replied.

“I’ll be fine. I’ll just hold it here until it stops bleeding.”

“Fine, whatever. If it doesn’t stop in half an hour, I’m calling mom.”

I walked into the kitchen and pumped a generous amount of soap onto my hands. I turned the water on hot and scrubbed away at the drying blood covering my fingers. When I dried my hands, I marched back upstairs to where Hailey was sitting on her bed crying. I wrapped my arms around my younger sister.

“Dad will be okay,” I said. “He just fell on the driveway and hit the back of his head. If the bleeding doesn’t stop in half an hour, we’ll call mom.”

“No.” Hailey wiggled out of my arms. “I’m calling mom now. It was Tony’s fault too. A good friend should wait to see if dad could get into the wheelchair, but he just left him on the driveway.”

When I was two, my dad was diagnosed with MS. Progressively over the years, it has gotten worse. Dad’s Multiple Sclerosis has affected his ability to walk. He has used a wheelchair since I was in fourth grade. He has very limited motion in his legs and diminished fine motor skills. My sister and I have become used to doctor’s appointments and hospital visits. Much more than kids the ages of seven and five should have to become used to places like that. It’s normal for us, but most people don’t have to deal with the situation that our family has.

After Hailey called mom, she told us that she was going to call Larry and Sonja, our grandparents, to take us to the ER. When they arrived, we all piled into their car. Dad had a whole roll of paper towels and was holding them to his head.

When we entered the hospital, the sterile scent washed over me. The harsh fluorescent lights illuminated the white tile. Larry stayed with dad while Sojna took Hailey and I to the cafeteria to get ice cream.

I filled the bowl to the top with the cold creamy dessert. I needed it. While it was acceptable for Hailey to cry, I couldn’t. I didn’t want to show her how scared I was too. Since I’m the older sister, I had to keep my calm or else she’d know that the situation was bad.

In the end, a couple of stitches was all it took.

My dad having MS has been a unique struggle for my family. It’s one few people experience. Even as disheartening as the situation is, I’m glad to be able to have this experience. As I’ve grown older and I’ve been able to comprehend more about the struggle my dad is facing, I’ve developed a different perspective of the world and people with disabilities. While disabilities can make some families more distant, they have made mine grow closer.