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Health Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
Proponent Testimony
June 28, 2017

Testimony in Support of Ohio Bill No. 252 to Designate January as “Blood Donor Awareness Month.”

Scott Boyd is a blood recipient and supporter of Community Blood Center. He is unable to attend the Sept. 13 Health Committee Hearing but has permitted CBC to provide testimony based on the accounts of his near-fatal farm accident on Aug. 12, 2016, his emergency medical treatment and recovery.

CBC spoke with Scott’s wife Cindee at the CBC “Iron Man” blood drive held in his honor at the Green Hills Community in West Liberty on Aug. 31, 2016. CBC spoke with Scott when he attended the Oct. 26, 2017 “Iron Man Part Two” blood drive at Green Hills.

CBC also interviewed Scott as a featured blood recipient for observance of January National Blood Donor Month 2017.

TOMORROW ‘JUST A PLUS’ FOR WEST LIBERTY ‘IRON MAN’

SCOTT BOYD’S COMEBACK FROM TRAUMATIC INJURY, BLOOD LOSS

WEST LIBERTY, Ohio – (Jan. 25, 2017) The outdoor-life, iron-pumping, muscle-car guy deep inside Scott Boyd is working hard to bring back as much as he can of his old self. Scott entered January National Blood Donor Month five months removed from the summer mowing accident when the bush hog he was using caught him in its teeth and chewed into his side like an angry shark.

Scott has come a long way since Aug. 12, 2016, the day he nearly bled to death in a field behind his West Liberty home. He needed 108 units of donor blood to survive, but his body has long since regenerated its own. He’s had more than a dozen surgeries, but more healing must come before two key surgeries ahead to receive a new hip.

The strength he built from hard work and a weightlifting regimen undoubtedly helped him survive the accident. These days he dedicates his rehabilitation efforts to the dream of walking again.

When asked if he is regaining his strength his reply was confident. “I think I am,” he said. “I’m walking on a treadmill. I couldn’t tell you what kind of weights I’m doing. I was a 300-pound bencher before this happened.”

Community Blood Center held August and October blood drives in West Liberty dedicated to Scott. The family named them the "Iron Man Blood Drives" for good reason. On the day of the accident his heart stopped twice while waiting for CareFlight and twice again in flight to Miami Valley Hospital. It was not his first experience of cheating death.

When he was 13 he was one of three boys who survived a car accident on the way home from football practice that left three others dead. Both arms and wrists were broken and his skull cracked. Years later he dove into a pond to rescue his young daughter and broke his neck.

"When I broke my neck I had to overcome the same kind of things," he said. "I've done it once and I can do it again. I lost my life twice on the ground and twice in the air... to have any opportunity at all, I'm just happy about that. Anything else is just a plus."

The West Liberty community rallied around Scott and his wife Cindee in the weeks and months after the accident, hosting fundraisers and donating blood. He would attend as many events as he could to thank his neighbors face to face.

"They donated a lot of blood and I used a lot of too," he said. "The whole town turned out. That's so much appreciated. I couldn't say that enough. It's hard to figure out how to repay that debt. I would never have expected what people stepped out and did. It just blew my mind with their kindness."

It was a special holiday season at the Boyd home. His sons came from California and Florida and daughter Chelsie from college in Columbus. Scott said nine-year-old son Noah "has been a big help with me." Cindee remains his greatest source of strength.

"She's my guardian angel," he said. "I could never dream... I hate that I have to put her through this. This happened to me and she has to take care of me and I hate that for her. She takes care of me."

Scott depends on crutches, a walker, and for any distance at all, a wheelchair. "I can't walk with my legs. My left hip is gone," he said. "It looks like a shark bit me."

"The traumatic blood loss has taken a toll on his short-term memory. "I can remember things from the past," he said. "They can tell me something at therapy about my appointment, and by the time I get home I don't have a clue. If it's left up to me, that's what happens."

Unchanged is his iron will. He keeps a clear vision for the future, and a deep gratitude for yet another chance on life.

"I went through a lot of blood. I bled out twice. I appreciate it," he said.

"I'm going to get better. I'm not going to be stopped from that. I've beat it before, I'll beat this. It's going to be hard but it's definitely coming."

'IRON MAN' SCOTT BOYD THANKS BLOOD DONORS

WEST LIBERTY MAN RECALLS NEAR-FATAL FARM ACCIDENT

WEST LIBERTY, Ohio – (Oct. 26, 2016) Short-term memory is still playing tricks on Scott Boyd. When he rolled his wheelchair into the Green Hills Community Wednesday, Oct. 26 for the “Iron Man Part II Blood Drive” in his honor he knew he had spent time there during his long recovery from a near-fatal farm accident. He just couldn't say when.

Scott was critically injured on Aug. 12 when he was caught in the blades of his bush hog while mowing a pasture. He suffered a “shark bite” wound to his side that shattered his hip and damaged his ribs and internal organs. He managed to send a scrambled text message to his wife Cindee, who by chance had come home from work at lunch time.

His heart stopped twice while waiting for CareFlight and twice again in flight to Miami Valley Hospital. He underwent multiple surgeries over the next 39 hours and received 108 units of blood, plasma and platelets. Against the odds, and with Cindee constantly at his side, he survived.

“They say I died four times,” said Scott. “If she hadn't had made it back and done all she did, it would have been too late.”

The first “Iron Man” replacement blood drive for Scott at Green Hills Community on Aug. 31 was expanded to accommodate more donors. It was one of many ways the West Liberty community would reach out with overwhelming support for Scott and his family.

Scott returned home on Oct. 4 after nearly two months of hospital care. Appointments were again added for Wednesday's “Iron Man Part II” blood drive and again it was a full house. The result was 64 donors, 12 first-time donors, and 56 donations for 112 percent of the collection goal.

Scott recognized every smiling face as he moved around the blood drive, thanking neighbors and old friends who came to donate. But details of those conversations would soon slip away. Severe blood loss takes a toll on the brain. He hopes that in time he will walk again, and remember more.

He still isn't sure why he jumped off his bush hog while mowing that day. Perhaps he cleared away a branch. But his memory of what happened next is crystal clear.

“I knew I was in trouble,” he said. “When it rolled over on me I figured I was done.” He began a fight for his life.

“I took hold of that blade,” he recalled. “It wouldn't turn – I think I stalled the motor out. It had cut me up pretty good at that point. I thought I was going to die. I was able to text my wife. She ran out to the field and I was behind the mower.”

Over the next 22 days Scott underwent 12 surgeries. He has at least two more surgeries ahead to replace his shattered hip. He forgets the detail that he must wait up to six months between hip

surgeries. He asks Cindee again about the schedule, and each time she answers he frowns with the same disappointment, feeling it again for the first time.

An amazing part of Scott's story is that the mower accident was not the first time he cheated death. When he was 13 he was one of three boys who survived a car accident on the way home from football practice that left three others dead.

"My best friends and a father died in a car accident," he said. "I've had that on my shoulders all these years." He removed his hat to reveal the scars like a crown of thorns around his forehead. "I broke both my arms and wrists and the top of my head was cut off, - I had stitches all around."

"I've cheated death twice," he said. "I wouldn't want to go for a third time."

Friends like Roni Lile, whose brother died in the crash, donated at both blood drives for Scott. Cindee's step-father Ed Fout donated at both blood drives as well. "I figured he would be here," said Ed. "He's getting around good for what he's been through. He's got that real grit to go."

Scott is lifting weights to build strength. He wants badly to regain his independence. "I want to drive again," he says with a smile. "I've got a couple of muscle cars. I keep trying to squeeze in that I can, but I'm not convincing anybody. I said I've got my right foot for the gas and brake."

Scott chatted with Joe Williams, who made a special effort to donate Wednesday. "I came for Scott," he said. "The last one filled up right away."

Scott knows it's a miracle that he is alive. "I thought for sure I was dead when I was under that mower," he said. "I know what a bush hog blade can do, I've cut through small trees. I knew whatever it did wouldn't be good."

He knows also that blood donations helped him survive, and he marvels at how donors continue to support him. "I appreciate the people giving," he said. "I didn't know how important giving blood was. I do now."

FAMILY BELIEVES GOD HAS PLANS FOR 'IRON MAN' SCOTT BOYD

WEST LIBERTY SUPPORTS INJURED NEIGHBOR WITH BLOOD DONATIONS

WEST LIBERTY, Ohio – (Aug. 31, 2016) "I just wanted to see my dad," nine-year-old Noah Boyd said, remembering how he stood at the road side Friday, Aug. 12, waiting to direct EMS crews to the pasture of their West Liberty home where his father Scott Boyd lay bleeding from a bush hog accident.

During the hurried arrival of the CareFlight helicopter Scott's wife Cindee Boyd was surprised when asked if Noah should cross the pasture to give his dad a kiss and a hug. "I said 'No, just get him to the hospital,'" Cindee recalled. She understands now they were giving Noah a chance to say a final goodbye.

Scott Boyd's heart stopped twice waiting for CareFlight and twice again in flight to Miami Valley Hospital. The mower had ripped a "shark bite" wound in his side, shattering his hip and clawing ribs and internal organs. During multiple surgeries over the next 39 hours he needed 108 units of blood, including plasma and platelets.

Against all odds, Scott survived. "They never told me the percentage. I know now it was one percent," Cindee wrote that day on her Facebook page. More surgeries followed and Scott slowly became aware of what happened to him. On Aug. 28 Noah could finally see his dad again.

The Boyd family considers it providence that Scott is alive and they embrace every chance to thank the tight-knit West Liberty community for their overwhelming support. Cindee took rare time away from the hospital Wednesday, Aug. 31 to visit the Community Blood Center blood drive at the Green Hills Community, dedicated as a replacement blood drive for Scott "Iron Man" Boyd.

Green Hills Marketing Director Rebecca Marker-Smith proposed dedicating the blood drive to Scott, and CBC's Kathy Pleiman was able to increase the capacity from the normal 25 appointments to 68. Supporters filled every appointment, resulting in 68 registrations and 59 donations, including 24 first-time donors.

"People asked, 'what can I do, how can I help?'" Rebecca said. "This was the perfect way for the community to reach out."

"It's unimaginable what they're going through," said donor Jeff Ramsey.

Cindee is well known in West Liberty where she serves as village clerk and treasurer and teaches a morning fitness class, but she said the response for Scott would be the same for any member of the community in need. "They are all awesome," she said. She credited her daughter Chelsie, a student at Columbus State Community College, for calling it the "Iron Man Blood Drive."

"My dad wouldn't be alive if people hadn't made those blood donations," Chelsie said.

Cindee and her family have had many hours to contemplate all the mystifying turns of fate that played a part in Scott's survival. Most significant to Cindee was how she happened to be at home on the Friday Scott was mowing and somehow became caught in the blades. She had handled village business in Bellefontaine that morning instead going during her lunch break.

She was in her kitchen making lunch for Noah when she received a dropped call from Scott. She sent a text "need anything." His scrambled reply included "help" and "911."

Daughters Casey and Chelsie live nearby, but son Coby was beginning a vacation in Peru. He got the call to come home just before embarking on a two-week wilderness trek.

Their son David is a third-year medical student in orthopedics. He was able to abruptly shift his rotation duty from a Florida hospital to Kettering Medical Center. His father's progress has now become a special case study in his medical education.

But what the family finds most uncanny is the way Scott has walked a fine line between life and death his entire life. When he awoke in the hospital he thought he had been in a car accident, then remembered “Oh yea, the bush hog got me.” But Scott might have been revisiting the first time he cheated death.

Roni Lile from Bellefontaine made her first blood donation in more than 40 years Wednesday to support Scott. In 1968 her brother Chris Hall was 12 years old and Scott was 13 when they were passengers in a car accident. Chris was one of the three people killed in the crash. Three boys survived, and Scott was one of them.

“Scott and I have been kindred spirits,” Roni said. “He’s part of the family. Scott’s become a surrogate brother to me.”

She said she went into a panic at the news of Scott’s mower injury. “It was like losing my brother all over again,” she said. But she now understands why he should be called “Iron Man.”

“He’s got a greater purpose,” she said. “I would have expected no one other than him to survive this.”

Chelsie has her own story about her dad’s stubborn resilience. When she was a toddler Scott dove into a pond and broke his neck. Yet he carried her back to the house before getting help.

Cindee has but one answer for why her husband’s light may flicker but never fade: “God has big plans for you Scott Boyd.”