

As we approach the anniversary of Hunter's accident, I often find myself reflecting on how far he has come and the incredible achievements he has made in just one year.

I remember the call so vividly, my sister telling me that my nephew was being life flighted. All I could do was hit the ground and pray. Emotions and questions flood over me. Wondering will he survive? And if so, how will this affect him long term physically and emotionally? Later that evening when I received photos of the burns & injuries that Hunter sustained, my heart broke just imagining how it must have felt to literally be burned alive and how I could not fathom the pain he endured.

Just one day after going through the most horrific thing imaginable, I was greeted with a big, reassuring smile on Hunter's face via FaceTime. When I should be the one full of light, love and encouraging words... instead, he was the one to console me and reassure me that he was going to be okay. After that, it came as no surprise that on the third day, Hunter was pushing through the pain and standing for the first time. Astonished, happy tears flowed from my eyes! But that was only the beginning of the amazing accomplishments that Hunter would go on to do!

One appointment after another, countless surgeries and procedures, not once did Hunter complain or wallow. He showed amazing perseverance and maintained the best attitude possible throughout it all. When he received the acceptance letter to attend a Burn camp, I witnessed just how excited he was to connect with other kids who had been through a similar situation. I was nervous for him because this was out of his comfort zone. But when he came back, I saw first hand that something shifted within him and the experience was beneficial in more ways than one.

Finally, to present day Hunter. To hear that not only did he write to our elected officials but he received a reply was monumental. To then get word that something that he is so passionate about is finally becoming a reality, to bring burn awareness to Ohio is absolutely phenomenal!

It is unfortunate that Hunter went through such a tremendous tragedy but I truly believe that God has a plan for each of us. Hunter has taken what has happened to him and turned it into something beautiful. Hunter is determined to use his accident as a learning tool for others, to speak publicly to bring awareness, and be an inspiration to many. I have always been proud of him in his academics, sports, and the person he is in general. But to see his strength, courage, and resiliency throughout his burn journey, I have never been more proud of him. I am excited to see where the future takes him!