

Interview with 8-year-old winner's Mom

**Bridget Somerville thanks CNS for the Mobility Research MX100 Gait Trainer; says "Cooper deserves his own chance at a healthy life, as do all these children."**

*April 28, 2005*

**How did you learn about CNS?**

I met Fia Richmond, founder of CNS, at a Hyperbarics convention in Florida in 2001. CNS was just beginning and I was excited to see the difference they could make in finding answers for our Brain injured kids.

**What is your son's Diagnosis/Injury?**

Cooper suffered a near drowning accident in our backyard pool on July 12, 1998 a day our lives changed forever. He was under water for 5 minutes and without a pulse after that for at least 25 minutes. We were told he wouldn't make it through the night, but he fought and brings us joy every day!



*Cooper Somerville*

**How did you engage others' help in sending CNS eCards or signing up for the CNS eNews?**

Cooper is coming up on the 7th anniversary of his accident. Since then we have had an outpouring of love and support from friends old and new, who have wanted to help him in any way they can. When I saw the contest in the CNS newsletter I knew it would be an easy way to enlist those who are always so willing to help. I sent out an email to everyone on my list briefly describing the goals of CNS. I added that equipment such as the Gait Trainer is very expensive and not always covered by insurance. It was easy for them to sign up and, in turn, help Cooper receive a helpful piece of equipment. I told them that way they could also keep updated on the latest technology that may help Cooper someday and maybe help CNS reach some of those goals.

**Why did winning the MX mean so much to you?**

I am highly involved and committed to helping Cooper recover. The things I've found to work for him are always expensive and usually not covered by insurance. The costs involved in the rehabilitation process can be enormous. I've thought for a long time that he could do more productive weight bearing if he had a gait trainer. After seeing him use similar equipment at The Eureka



*Cooper participating in Sunbeam Therapy*

Institute I knew it would be helpful for him. I often am working with him alone. This equipment will allow me the ability to do more with him without having to have a lot of help. I think it will also give him another way to be interactive with others. Standing on his own two feet and not hunched in a chair. I hope that the MX 100 will ultimately help him learn to stand independently!

#### **Is the mission of CNS important to you and your family?**

The mission of CNS is highly important to our family. Though Cooper brings us joy, he also suffers greatly every day. To watch him go through this breaks our hearts! We've searched the world for ways to help him. Along the way we have met several other children suffering as he does. It's so sad to us that these kids haven't even had a chance at life. Instead of enjoying typical childhood activities they worry about muscle pain and head control. On top of watching him suffer, we simply miss him. We knew our beautiful boy one way, then lost that boy and have had to learn to love the beautiful boy he's become now. The loss we suffered on top of everything else has been too painful for words. It's not for us. It's for Cooper. Cooper deserves his own chance at a healthy life, as do all these children. CNS has these kids' best interests at heart. We want Cooper and all the kids struggling to enjoy their young lives to have the answers they need. CNS is making this happen and making it happen the right way.

#### **Do you feel CNS will find cures and treatments for children with neurological disorders?**

I know they will! I know the level of commitment those involved have. When the founders are parents of a brain-injured child themselves you know the organization is committed. On top of that you have tireless researchers, doctors, scientists, etc. that won't give up until an answer is found. When you also enlist the help of other committed parents, it seems the best way to tackle these tough situations relentlessly!

#### **How important is it to find these cures and treatments?**

It's important on so many levels. We are all touched in some way by someone who would benefit from the research CNS is doing. How tough would it be to be faced with a brain injury within your own family unit and have the doctors turn to you and say they don't have any answers? The human body is so delicate. There is a large population living with horrible brain injuries, spinal cord injuries etc. and an even larger population caring for them. Think of how much happiness could be brought to these people's lives if they had answers. Think of how much more productive we could be as a society if we didn't have to deal with the care of these severe disabilities.

**How did Cooper's change in circumstance influence others, especially family and friends?**

I know Cooper has had a great impact on people's lives. God has used this terrible tragedy to touch our family in so many ways. He's brought wonderful people into our lives. He's got others out of the house and helped to give them purpose when they've agreed to be a "Cooper Helper". So many people complain about petty things. Cooper has helped give others a better perspective. People we know now appreciate their health and their children's health so much more. It's given them patience and understanding along with a great deal of compassion.

Cooper's brother Cody has been deeply impacted by this tragedy. Cody was only 6-years-old when Cooper had his accident. He's had to deal with a lot at a very young age. He's come through it all with flying colors. He's a smart compassionate young man that appreciates life and is committed to helping his brother recover just as much as his parents are. Though it's been traumatic Cody has learned a great deal.



*Bridget and Jeff Somerville with their children; 8 yr old Cooper, 13 year old Cody and 2 year old Sarah*

**Do you think society and medicine have done enough for these children?**

I'm daily faced with how much medicine is a business. There are only answers where there is money. Without celebrities getting similar injuries there is little being done to help these kids. There is so much bureaucratic red tape that parents of these children are faced with little help and with unhelpful bureaucrats making decisions about their kids. When you have no help, then how are you supposed to earn a living that would help you pay for the very answers you're searching for? Western medicine seems only concerned with treating symptoms just enough to shut people up. I've been told straight out that governmental help isn't preventative and only deals with the problem after the fact. The whole system has made me very disillusioned. Society needs to have a deeper understanding of how their tax dollars are being spent and take more involvement of where they want it to go. When that isn't enough they should take matters into their own hands. Wouldn't it be nice to have assistance already available in the event, God forbid, you should need help? Do people really want to wait until they're in dire straights before they begin helping fight for what's right?

**Is it important to you for CNS to be successful in its mission to find cures and treatments?**

It's important for me, it's important for Cooper and it's important for those I know and love. It's important for us all!!!