

Remembering Shriners Hospitals, Saying Thanks

LISE Deguire doesn't really remember the day or the barbecue in the backyard itself. She was only 4 years old. But bits and pieces come back to her "in flashes."

"I was burned on over 65 percent of my body," she begins. "Some lighter fluid next to a charcoal grill exploded. My mother was burned, too...but not as bad as me."

Terrified and unsure where to turn, the family rushed to a local New Hampshire hospital, but were told by the staff there was nothing they could do. Not willing to accept defeat, Deguire's family eventually turned to Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. Deguire stayed there for five months and underwent two surgeries.



LISE DEGUIRE AND HER TWO CHILDREN

"In 1968, Shriners Hospital for Children -- Boston opened nearby," she continues. "I'm so grateful the Shriners Hospital was there. Without them, I might not even be alive today."

The next 15 years of Deguire's life included over 20 surgeries to repair her face, neck, chest and arms. The explosion seriously burned her neck, chin and lower lip. Plastic surgery was necessary to reconstruct what had been burned and scarred in the blast. In that time, Deguire formed a close connection with her surgeon.

"I adored **Dr. John Constable**," she says. "We still correspond at holidays. He came to my wedding. He'll always be a special, precious part of my life."

Recently, Deguire visited another surgeon to find out if anything more could be done to address the scarring that remains on her face. She was told "you had amazing work" and there was nothing more to be done.

"It's kind of bittersweet. I know I received state-of-the-art care from Shriners Hospitals for Children, but you do kind of still hope there are options."

Looking at Deguire today, you can tell she's been burned, but it's not the first thing you notice. Her injuries have not stood in the way of a fulfilling career -- Deguire has a private psychology practice in New Jersey -- marriage and a family.

"I have two gorgeous daughters who are 11 and 9," she shares. "Thanks to Shriners Hospitals for Children, the disfigurement from my burns was vastly reduced. I needed the care they provided to

have a normal life."

Today when she reflects back on her experience, Deguire remembers being far away from home and missing her parents. But she knows that Shriners Hospitals changed her life, and she feels a strong connection to the organization.

"The whole time I was receiving treatment, not one person ever asked for money," she says. "That was such a godsend because paying for our rehabilitation and care was initially a big cause of stress for my family."

"I just think Shriners Hospitals is one of the most truly generous organizations there is," she reflects. "They do what they do for one reason: to help children overcome terrible problems."



Lise Deguire sustained burns over 65 percent of her body when she was just 4 years old. Today, she credits much her success in life to the treatment she received at the Boston Shriners Hospital.

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