Adam and Brooke Traweek
with their daughter June

June Sunshine

As their daughter faces one illness after another, the Traweeks hold strong to faith and miracles

Written by Holly Leger | Photography by ASP Photography

At 5 months old, June was diagnosed with West syndrome and given a prognosis of only a few months to live

When Adam and Brooke Traweek's daughter June turned 5 months old, they began to notice something a little strange: she was twitching. "It was like a muscle spasm," Adam recalls. "But it would happen over and over again in big clusters."

The couple called a pediatrician that night, fearing June was having seizures. However, after describing June's symptoms, and later showing the twitches at a doctor's appointment, the Traweeks were told all was fine. She was just making weird movements as babies usually do. "We weren't supposed to worry about it, but did," Brooke says. "Every time it would happen, I would burst into tears. Something was wrong."

Bleak Diagnosis

Brooke's fears were realized when two weeks later, June was diagnosed with West syndrome, or infantile spasms, a specific type of seizure seen in epilepsy syndrome that can cause brain damage and developmental regression. "She had been sitting up and eating solid foods before this and by the time we figured out what was happening, she couldn't hold up her head anymore. She couldn't roll over anymore," Brooke says. From there, June began a series of shots, which Adam administered in her leg each night. The treatment only had about a 50% chance of working, but Adam and Brooke prayed for healing and asked their loved ones to do the same.

Six weeks into the treatment, Brooke received a call from the doctor who had results from one of June's previous medical tests. Unrelated to infantile spasms, June also had Hurler syndrome, which is a rare, inherited disease of metabolism in which a person cannot break down long chains of sugar molecules called glycosaminoglycans. Many children diagnosed with the disease die young, and the doctor told Brooke that based on June's test results she probably wouldn't have much longer.

"I called Adam at work and said, 'You need to come home. We just got a terrible phone call,'" Brooke recalls. "We just cried and prayed together and played with June all night."

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Medical Miracles

A month or two later, after running one more blood test on their daughter, a geneticist had surprising news: June no longer had Hurler syndrome. “The geneticist said this is medically impossible. The first test is not a test you can make a mistake on,” Brooke says. In order to double check this phenomenon, the doctors performed all the tests a second time. All of them came back negative. Confused, the doctors didn’t know what to tell the Traweeks. But the couple said they needed no explanation.

“We told them, ‘God healed her. You don’t know how many people have been praying for this baby girl,’” Brooke says. “It was just amazing.” About that same time, the Traweeks were given another miracle. The infantile spasms stopped as well. “Everything just went away,” Brooke adds.

Overwhelming Seizures

Around the end of 2014, just a couple of months after testing negative for Hurler syndrome, June began having seizures. During an EEG in February 2015, she was recorded having 550 a day. Brooke estimates that in the months following, June sometimes had around 1,000 seizures.

“They were getting so dangerous,” Brooke recalls. “She was going forward so violently, she was hitting her face on everything.” To try and keep June in a safe environment, Adam and Brooke laid gym mats throughout their house and placed pool noodles on June’s crib, shopping carts, and table edges.

The Traweeks continued working with therapists and neurologists throughout the year until June’s seizures gradually disappeared, which they saw as another miracle from God. By August, at 2 years old, her outlook improved and her development finally took off. June began talking, standing, and dramatically improving her fine motor skills.

Living in Grace

Despite conquering various challenges, a recent genetic test revealed June has Pompe Disease, a rare inherited disorder which is caused by the buildup of a complex sugar called glycogen in the body’s cells. Similar to muscular dystrophy, it weakens the muscles, leading to mobility and respiratory problems. In some cases, it is fatal.

The Traweeks have faced these odds before and the couple chooses to find light in the darkness of this disease. “When she was having thousands of seizures a day, I remember praying about it, and getting peace from God,” Brooke says. “He surpasses all understanding. He really is there for the brokenhearted. We know that if she were taken away from us, that she would be with God.” **KM**

HOLLY LEGER is a freelance writer and mom who loves to feature inspirational people and their testaments of faith.