



Upcoming "Luke's Leaders" mouse race to raise awareness for pediatric stroke victims

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
February 15 2017 6:33 AM





WOOD RIVER - A mother's love for her children is an undeniable force to be reckoned with. When forced to endure numerous trials and tribulations, a mother will do anything to keep her child safe and healthy.

Jamie Slaten was thrilled to give birth to her first child, a little boy named **Luke**. When she noticed that her newborn was having trouble with his right hand. At six months old, her son had his first MRI and the test revealed a heartbreaking result.

While Jamie was pregnant, Luke had endured a pediatric stroke, leaving him with limited function on his right side. At only 9 months old, the infant began therapy to try to regain some of the function to the right side of his body.

When Luke was 2 years old, he began having seizures.

“He went through multiple medications and EEGs that ultimately led to brain surgery in August 2015,” Slaten said. “The surgery was very scary, but what was even scarier was his condition. He was having seizures every five to ten minutes.”



Luke was diagnosed with a condition called **Electrical Status Epilepticus in Sleep (ESES)**, a rare, age-related disorder characterized as epilepsy with different seizure types, motor and neuropsychological impairment. Typical onset occurs usually at 1-2 years old with a peak at age 8.

“Surgery was our best option, so he had a procedure called a hemispherectomy. It was a 6-hour surgery that disconnected the left side of his brain.”

Since his surgery, Luke has not had a single seizure. In August 2016, he was taken off all of his epilepsy medicine. Now six years old, Luke’s memory has improved and he is doing much better in school.

To bring awareness to families and children who have suffered with pediatric strokes, Slaten is throwing the **Luke’s Leaders Mouse Race** at **7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 25**, at the **Wood River VFW Post 2859, 231 E. Edwardsville Road, Wood River, Ill.**

Doors open for the event at 6:30 p.m. Guests are invited to bring their own food, but beer is provided and a cash bar is available for other drinks. Baskets will also be up for auction. Tickets are \$120 for a table of 8 or \$20 per individual. Tables can be reserved by e-mailing Jaime Slaten at jbowermaster@att.net. All checks can be made payable to “Luke’s Leaders.”

Proceeds of event will be donated to the **Children’s Hemiplegia and Stroke Association (CHASA)**. The organization put Slaten in contact with other parents with a support group on Facebook. From there, people from all around the world give input or ask questions about their children that have had strokes. Last year, the Slaten family met with other St. Louis area CHASA members at an event at the St. Louis Zoo and have created friendships within the group.



“This organization helps families of pediatric stroke victims with therapy, orthotics and even college scholarships,” Slaten said. “It is very near and dear to my heart because we have been through a lot with Luke. It is unfortunate that these innocent children have to go through situations like these. Every 1 in 2,800 live child births result in stroke.”

Despite everything that he has gone through at such a young age, Luke remains to be a kind little boy with a heart of gold. He is very protective of his 4-year-old little sister, Elise, and has many friends at school.

“It makes my heart melt when I go to a school function and kids yell, ‘hi Lucas!’” she said. “He loves trains and race cars. Luke is my miracle child and I would do everything for him.”

Even though her family had struggled with problems with Luke's health from an early age, Slaten maintains a positive attitude, despite all of the trials that life throws her family's way.

"There are days that are harder than others, but you don't let it keep you down. It's okay to be upset, but it's not okay to let it ruin your or your child's life.

"Everyone has a purpose in life. Mine is to take care of my son and make sure he has all the help he will ever need," she said.