



Max Schewitz Foundation

News

where survival starts with you



Dear Friends,

We all worry about parenting at one time or another. Even the cheapest car comes with an indexed manual, but not your child. Sure, advice books abound, but by the time you read, digest, and incorporate ideas, your child is giving you advice on your assisted-living options. It's tempting to think parenting is innate, instinctive, and automatic, but in fact it is challenging, which is why it is rewarding.

We bristle at advice from aged relatives that begins with, *Back when I was raising kids*. . . Unfortunately, the American Heart Association is a lot like that aged relative spouting outdated advice. They do not recommend routine preventive EKG screening for young adults despite substantial evidence that EKG screening saves lives. A pediatric cardiologist responded to the death of a young boy to cardiac causes by saying, "It breaks my heart anytime a child dies. There's a significant percent of sudden death that screening will not pick up. And we know that the reality is sudden death is really rare." We're not allowed to swear here, so we'll let you add your own response. EKGs can detect upwards of 60% of conditions that can lead to sudden cardiac death.

Thanks to supporters like you, we're here to fill the gap in care left open by outdated policies. We have identified many, many area kids with potentially life-threatening hidden conditions who now can get treatment, and many more who have learned about non-life-threatening, but important conditions and can manage them proactively. We and the children of our area thank you profoundly for valuing their lives by caring for their hearts.



You might not consider this useful parenting advice, but here are three things we learned:

1. Empower your kids with tools and encouragement: let them earn a black belt, cope with boredom, try and fail.
2. Their lives began the moment they were born. Every day is precious. And, cooperative living aside, each day belongs to them. Make sure you're living yours and allow them to live theirs.
3. If your kids are anything like ours, consider putting a lawyer on retainer by 8th grade and remember there's nothing 20 years of psychotherapy won't cure.

Hugs,

Mary Beth & David Schewitz

Is there an Echo?

An echocardiogram, or echo, is an ultrasound of the heart and allows the physician to see the heart working in real time. EKGs, as well as family or personal health histories, can be indicators of a potential cardiac condition that needs to be clarified. For example, let's say your family has a history of mitral valve prolapse. An echo will tell if junior is taking after the rest of the family. Our cardiologists rely on echo to evaluate students right at testing. That way the student's family receives a quick answer to a potentially troublesome issue at no added cost.



Brooke's family was relieved she got an echo at testing that ruled out a cardiac issue.

Our echo units are worn out! We have echoed over 1,000 students with these units, which already had years of use when donated to us. Cardiology Associates of Glenbrook and Evanston just donated their used echo unit to us, but we still need to purchase another unit. New machines are \$26,000, so we need your donations. Small donations add up quickly—\$25 from 1,000 people would put a new unit at our screenings. Thanks in advance!

So how did practically free testing work out?

Last year we announced the end of our **free** cardiac testing (supported by our fundraising and generous donors and sponsors) and its replacement, **practically free** testing (\$15 per tested student, waived for those in need).



Some schools paid for testing for their students, some had parents pay the fee, and some discontinued screening for their students. Parents want EKG testing for their kids and are finding creative ways to bring testing back to schools that had discontinued screening.

The \$15 per-student fee defrays many, but not all, costs. We still need your support as donors and volunteers, and hope you will support our mission.



Maxtravaganza 2015



Thanks to our hosts, Lake Forest Sportscars, and presenting sponsor, NorthShore University HealthSystem Cardiovascular Institute.



NorthShore
University HealthSystem
Cardiovascular Institute



Another Crazy But True Max Story

Max's Tree-Climbing Adventure, as told by Rob Carmichael, Curator, Wildlife Discovery Center

Max, even at a young age, was a human bloodhound in the field. On a group hike in a remote, old-growth forest, I was talking about the kinds of animals we might see, when Max looked up and screamed, "Snake!"

Before I could utter the words "Don't even think about it," Max had already scaled 50 feet up a tree and wasn't taking no for an answer. Finally, he reached the snake: a massive black rat. He grabbed it gently, lifting it in true victory fashion. "I got it," he shouted, at which time he was promptly bitten hard as the snake latched onto his face and wrapped around his head. Without hesitation, he shimmied down, with a 6-foot snake attached to his head. Blood gushed down all sides of his face, but in true warrior fashion he simply said, "Cool snake, eh?"



We ended up keeping the snake and bringing him back to the Wildlife Discovery Center where he still remains on exhibit today.

We appreciate you thinking of us when planning your charitable giving.



Cardiac Screening

- 56,250 EKGs given to local high school and college students, and professional athletes
- 1,027 students received free echocardiograms on test day
- 1,000 students with abnormalities in their history, EKG or echo
- Many lives saved thanks to countless volunteers and donors



HeartSmartEKG.org & MaxandtheWildThings.com



Which of these statements about Max are true or false?

1. Max earned a black belt before his 12th birthday
2. Max had his own animal education business
3. Max wanted to trade in his GMC Jimmy for a horse named Jimmy
4. Max met a panther face-to-face
5. Max was stranded without a cell phone in Australia when his passport went missing
6. Max caught a fish with his bare hands

Answers on next page

A Most Unusual Break-in



This fall, in a man-versus-nature episode, friends of the Max Schewitz Foundation, Stu and Kathy, got quite the surprise when they discovered a young red-tailed hawk had broken through a screen and become trapped in their porch. Cue the chaos! Well aware of the hawk's sharp talons and agitated state, Stu and Kathy reached out to the police, animal control, and then Mary Beth Schewitz, who contacted Rob Carmichael at the Wildlife Discovery Center. Rob was out, but emailed suggestions.

In the end, Stu destroyed a few more screens and the healthy bird flew free. Nature wins again. Have any man-versus-nature stories to share? Post them to our Facebook page and be sure to follow Nick Mancuso's nature-focused blog on our website.

Screens for Teens provided cardiac testing here

- Antioch High School **
- Carthage College
- Chicago Red Stars
- College of Lake County**
- Deerfield High School*
- Glenbrook North & South HS*
- Grayslake Central & North HS*
- Halas Hall: Carmel, Loyola, North Chicago, Zion Benton**
- Highland Park High School*
- Lake Forest College**
- Lake Forest High School*
- Lake Zurich High School
- Lakes Community High School, Jr class only*
- Libertyville High School*
- Mundelein High School
- New Trier—freshmen only*
- North Chicago High School**
- St. Viator High School
- Stevenson High School
- Vernon Hills High School
- Wauconda High School**
- Waukegan High School**
- West Lake Christian Academy

*School scheduled for the upcoming school year. ** School that could use more parent involvement. It's as easy as emailing your principal about scheduling a screening.

Facts about Max:
They're all true. See our website for details. Kids are our future. Let's protect their hearts.



Nick Mancuso didn't realize he had Max's passport until Nick was on an earlier flight back to the USA. An exciting end to Max's last trip.

