

Neighbors

WEDNESDAY,
MARCH 8,
2006



AT PLAY

Kaleigh Gomes, a junior at Providence High, was among the local winners in last month's N.C. Senior Swimming Championships 8M

NEWS FROM NEXT DOOR

Brandon Brown, John Wherry and Robert Lawrence recently earned their Eagle Scout awards 2M

ALSO INSIDE

Heads Up.....5M
Matthews news.....6M
Police blotter.....8M
Church news9M
Police blotter12M



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Howard and Dana Scott now have a treehouse to honor their son, Tyler, who died recently from cancer. Neighborhood children are already using the treehouse that was built by friends of the family.

A HOUSE IN THE TREES: Tyler Scott will never get to enjoy his new treehouse, but his family and friends will.

PAGE 4M

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SECTION M
SOUTH ZONE



Treehouse is an apt remembrance

Friends build structure that the 5-year-old brain cancer victim would have loved

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Howard and Dana Scott's sons have developed their own identities.

Chase, at 9, is the most strait-laced and rules-oriented.

Bryce is 7. Howard calls him Mr. Confidence because Bryce says he's the best at anything.

Aiden is the baby. He's 3 and a fun-loving, good-natured kid.

And Tyler?

He was a ladies' man. And a charmer. And a "worker man."

He was an angel.

On Feb. 8, Tyler Scott died of brain stem glioma, a juvenile cancer. Before the 5-year-old died, his parents asked him what he wanted once he left the hospital. He asked for a treehouse.

This Saturday, Tyler will get his wish. His family will dedicate a 230-square-foot treehouse to Tyler. It's in the Scotts' backyard and will be open to kids in their SouthPark neighborhood.

The treehouse will have bunk beds, light fixtures, a television and video games.

Howard and Dana said it's a fitting tribute for Tyler, who loved to build and fix things. Last Christmas, the "worker man" asked for only tools.

Tyler also liked doing yardwork. Neighbors said he'd help rake and blow leaves — more than their own children.

Tyler was diagnosed Jan. 30. His parents said they didn't recognize the symptoms, but he couldn't grasp anything with his hand. After days of tests, doctors found Tyler's brain tumor.

Dana said the disease was very aggressive. Her son became very sick during the next 10 days. He was treated at Carolinas Medical Center before he went to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn. Dana and Howard brought him back to Charlotte so his brothers could say goodbye.

"Selfishly, you want your children to live forever," Howard said. "But we're glad he went quickly so he didn't have to suffer."

While Tyler was at Carolinas Medical Center, family friend Rick Norvell lent Tyler a book on treehouses. Norvell owns Absolute Remodeling Inc. Tyler picked his favorite, and a crew set out to build Tyler's treehouse.

All the labor and supplies were donated.

Norvell and his crew worked on the treehouse on weekends. Strangers also have helped.



COURTESY OF THE SCOTT FAMILY

Family friend Rick Norvell and his crew from Absolute Remodeling Inc. built the treehouse in the Scotts' backyard.



COURTESY OF THE SCOTT FAMILY
Tyler Scott

HOW THEY REMEMBER TYLER

- Family friend Rod Johnson said he was fearless. Tyler once swam right into a pool wall. While most children might cry, he wanted to do it again.
- Family friend Brett Sovine said he was caring. The older kids would trample Sovine's 3-year-old son, Tanner, but Tyler would look after him and Aiden.
- Dad Howard Scott said Tyler was a ladies' man. He won "best couple" with a teenager during his summer swim lessons. "He has a way of getting you wrapped around his finger. He's just a charmer."

WHAT IS BRAIN STEM GLIOMA?

A tumor that forms on the midbrain, pons or medulla (all in the posterior) of the brain. The disease usually affects children ages 5-10. Symptoms include double vision, an inability to completely close the eyelids, a drooping of one side of the face and difficulty chewing and swallowing. Other symptoms are weakness of arms or legs and difficulty speaking and walking.

Surgery to remove tumors is generally not possible because they are widely spread within the brain stem. Surgery is possible in a few patients where a tumor is very localized.

— SOURCE: ST. JUDE CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, WWW.STJUDE.ORG

Lowe's and RR Donnelly supplied the lumber. A former employee of Norvell's drove from Asheville each weekend to help.

Howard and Dana want to help others the way people have supported them. They've started a nonprofit, Tyler's Treehouse, with the help of another friend Brett Sovine. He is an attorney who's doing pro bono work for the foundation.

Tyler's Treehouse will raise money for brain stem glioma research; it'll also benefit local organizations in which Tyler would have been involved. The foundation's first project: building dugouts for

Park Sharon's baseball league. Tyler would've played this season.

Sovine tearfully said Tyler was someone who touched lives. About 450 people attended his funeral. "I just sat there and looked around thinking, 'I wonder how many people would be at my funeral.'"

Sovine said the neighborhood kids can't wait to play in the treehouse, but they'd trade it to have Tyler back.

The Scotts agree.

Howard said his boys miss their brother, though Aiden can't really grasp what happened.

"All he knows is that Tyler is up in heav-

en with baby Jesus," Howard said.

Sovine, Norvell and other friends recall good times with Tyler. Dana said it's a comfort to have people remember him.

"He was taken from us for a reason. I believe it was to help people," Howard said. "He may not have been able to do it as one person, but as a spirit, through his foundation, he's going to help a lot of people."

For more information on the Scotts' foundation, go to www.tylerstreehouse.org.