



BETH AND NICK PELLERITO

## Treatment in Poland gives family hope

Poland - a land across the sea that we had never thought about until last March when we went to a meeting and just listened about a cerebral palsy treatment that was only available in this far-off land.

We looked at each other and agreed that we had to try this because, if we didn't, we would always wonder "what if?"

Nicholas was born with congenital cytomegalovirus, which caused him to be delayed in almost all areas of development. He is deaf and uses American Sign Language as his means of communication. The whole family is learning to sign.

He is a healthy, sweet boy who loves people, especially his grandparents. In his four years of life we have pushed Nick to be the best he can be, as is true for all of our children.

With normal kids, you spend your time going to soccer games and computer camp. With Nick, we go to sign language camp and to Poland to teach him how to walk.

June 1, 1998 was Nicholas' first day of treatment at the Euromed Center in Mielno, Poland. His day started with breakfast at 7 a.m., and then we went to the gel room where he got his gel packs on his legs and back to help loosen his muscles.

After about 15 minutes, we went to his gym, where his therapists massaged him for 30 minutes. This was a very important component of his therapy because it helped to strengthen his muscles.

Next he was ready for the Adeli Suit. This was one of the key elements of the whole program. While wearing the Adeli Suit he had three therapists working with him. The Adeli Suit is a modified cosmonaut suit with elastic bands that mirror the arrangement of the muscles of the body.

The suit allowed Nick to feel like we do in our bodies. The bands held him up straighter and helped him feel stronger so he could build muscle on his own. He was in the suit for two hours. He did a variety of exercises to improve his strength and balance.

When he finished his time in the Adeli Suit he got a 20-minute break. He was usually ravenous by this time and would gobble down fruit, peanut butter sandwiches and breakfast bars.

He would then go on to do more exercises that involved weights and pulleys and bungee cords. For the first 10 days he would then go on to therapy that involved electrical stimulation of various pressure points around his body. He was finished about 1 p.m. each day. He gained strength and a feeling of what his body can do.

Our time in Poland was very emotional. Nick cried and we cried. It was hard to see him work so hard and not see much. But he kept pushing on. We had to be his cheerleaders each day.

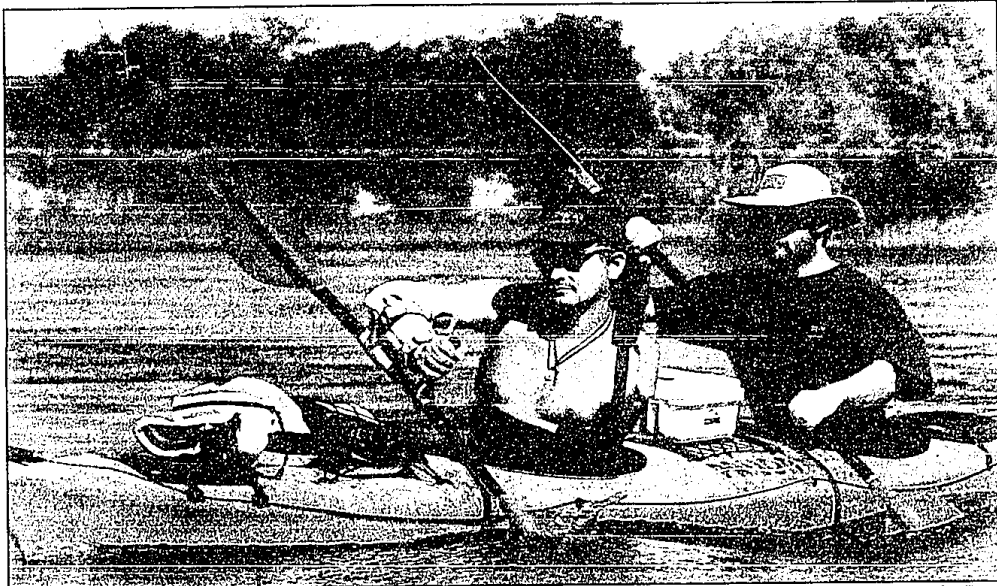
The first week was the hardest because this was new to us all. As each day finished, we could start to see his little body stand straighter and he could walk better. He was also up on his knees more.

There was also something happening that we didn't expect - he was speaking new words each day. Remember, he is deaf and, prior to going to Poland, could speak only a couple of words. He also seemed to comprehend what we were saying (signing) to him better and to follow directions better.

This is not a miracle cure. It involves hard work and is based on 1930s American medicine. The Euromed staff believes that these children have tremendous potential and that they just need to be given the opportunity to learn.

We are going back to Poland later this year for 28 days and are hoping that this trip will be even better than the first. But we will maintain reasonable expectations for our son and be satisfied with any improvement.

Please see CHAT ROOM, B2



PHOTOS BY DAVE WILLIAMS

Kayaking: Paul Templer (left) maneuvers his paddle with a Velcro-strap pad attached to his right arm on the Zambezi River. Behind him is Dave Humpleby.

# JOURNEY

## TO THE CENTER OF THE MINE

### River trip raises awareness of land mine victims

BY MARY RODRIQUE  
STAFF WRITER

Attacks by hungry crocodiles, capsizing in swirling water rapids, feverish bouts of malaria and undetonated land mines couldn't stop them.

The Make A Difference Foundation-sponsored kayak expedition along 1,600 miles of the Zambezi River in east Africa completed its mission - to bring attention to land mine victims and offer help to amputees.

The foundation is led by Farmington businessman Dave Williams. The expedition was led by Paul Templer. A native Zimbabwean, Templer gained international fame nearly two years ago when he was attacked by a hippopotamus while working as a river guide on the Zambezi River. A second guide was killed in the attack. Templer lost an arm but managed to pry open the hippo's jaws to save his life. He subsequently came to Michigan where he was fitted with a prosthetic limb by Rochester Hills prosthetics company, Wright & Filippis.

#### Survivor turns crusader

He and Williams connected on the idea of using his accident to bring worldwide attention to land mine victims and to help amputees in Africa. Money was raised locally and the kayak expedition was launched in May. It took three months for the crew - all experienced kayakers and river guides - to complete the course. Ten men started but two dropped out along the way. Four contracted malaria; one almost died. Like Templer, most were native Zimbabweans. One American, Royal Oak native Chris Walton, and one Brit, Dave Humpleby, rounded out the crew.

They began their journey at Kalene Hill, the river's

source, near the Angola-Zambia border. They carried their kayaks 70 kilometers because the river was too shallow until they reached a point just south of Lumumba, Angola. From there they were on water through three countries - Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, eventually finishing their route at the river's mouth - the Indian Ocean.

"This is the first step in, hopefully, a long program," said Templer, who is in Farmington to help raise awareness about land mines. "We made great contacts in four countries - Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique. It was particularly successful in reaching out to (amputees), especially the children."

#### Ten men started, but two dropped out along the way. Four contracted malaria; one almost died.

Used prosthetic limbs are being sent to clinics in these African nations through the foundation to be used by amputees. Thus far 27 children prostheses have been donated and await shipment to African clinics.

"We've made a commitment to these people to adulthood," said Williams, a retired vice president of marketing for hr Krueger, a Farmington builder of automotive machine tools. He said the trip raised \$25,000 for prosthetics and another \$10,000 in reserve. The foundation is seeking corporate sponsorship to keep the effort alive.

#### Grueling journey

The kayakers paddled up to 50 miles per day, experiencing near-drownings in vortex-like white water



Kuda: Kudzwashe Paganga, 9, of Zimbabwe hugs a stuffed hippo toy given to him by expedition members. The youngster, who lost both hands in a land mine explosion, is one of the children being helped by Make-A-Difference.

rapids and encounters with wild animals. "Paul and Dave Humpleby go down again. Dave was drawn into a whirlpool which quickly sucked him down six or seven meters. He fought below the surface for 20 seconds before he reached the surface and started to swim towards a pool of calm water between two rock outcroppings on the left bank. But as he puts his head down and starts stroking, we spot a five-meter croc slip into the water from the base of the rocks. He's swimming right at Dave."

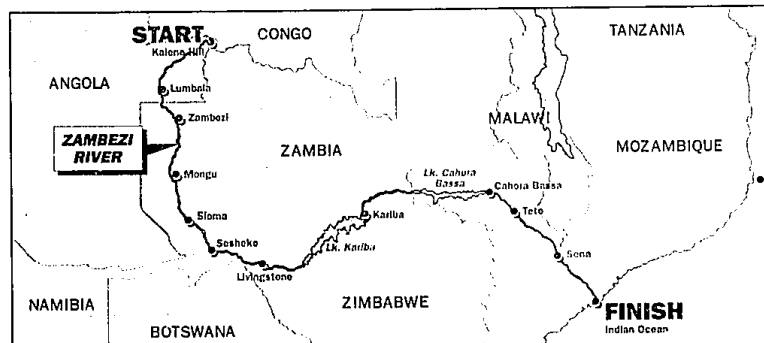
Butch, only 10 meters from him, frantically strokes his kayak between Dave and the croc and screams "Climb on! Croc!" He scrambles atop the kayak's bow and the croc disappears underwater.

- Journal entry from Chris Walton

The first time Templer's kayak capsized and he was wearing his prosthetic arm, "I sank like a stone," he recalled. Thus the rest of the expedition was completed without his artificial limb attached. During another spill, the paddle, which was Velcro-strapped to his arm, almost caused him to drown because he couldn't detach it. Others came to his rescue.

The crew camped along the river banks, often in areas infested with land mines and disease-carrying mosquitoes. River water was boiled for tea. Meals consisted of dehydrated vegetables and rice, diet sup-

Please see LAND MINES, B2



**AFRICA**

Enlarged area

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**3-MONTH EXERCISION:**

- 8 men
- 4 kayaks
- 1,600 miles on the Zambezi River