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Father copes by creating

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Scott Newport's son Evan wasn't expected to live past his second birthday. He is now 2 1/2 years old, and Newport has been devoting as much time as he can to giving back to those who have helped his son.

Evan was born with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, a disorder that affects how the heart functions. He had to spend the first 252 days of his life in hospitals. The heart disorder was caused by Noonan's syndrome, which also causes Evan to bruise easily.

Evan spent his first four months at Beaumont Hospital and the next five months at the University of Michigan's C.S. Mott's Children's Hospital. It was there where he was finally diagnosed with Noonan's and it was also where Newport thought of how he could give something back to all the organizations, doctors and nurses who helped them out.

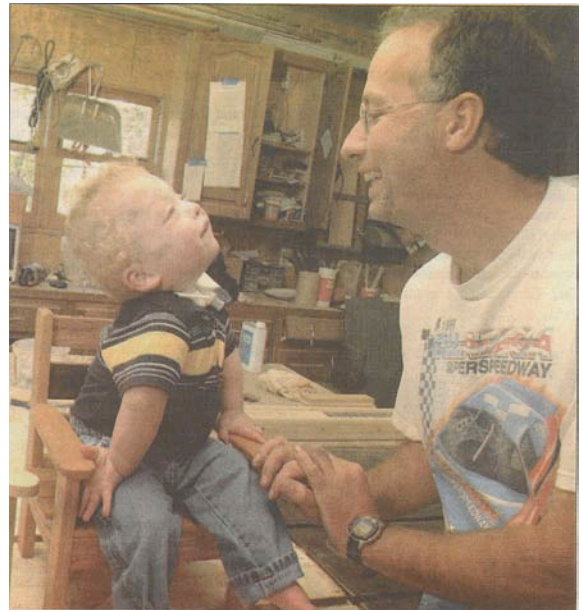
Newport is self-employed as a builder and carpenter.

When he works in people's homes, he ends up with damaged wood, and old cabinets and doors. He started taking those materials and making small desks, chairs, organizers and boxes out of them. "I take stuff that was going to be thrown away and make beautiful things out of them," he said.

At first he gave the homemade furniture away to other families whose children had the same disorders as Evan. Finding families has been easy thanks to the Internet. Newport has sent pieces to families in California, Arizona, New Jersey and even Finland. He tells the families that the pieces are like their children: They have imperfections, but they are still beautiful.

Newport will soon begin selling some of his pieces through MT Hunter, a Birmingham furniture store. He plans to give each month's proceeds to a different group that has helped Evan. One of those groups is the Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation, which funds medical research on the disorder.

Although Newport's furniture helps other families and institutes, he said it also helps him. "It's part of my therapy. It gives me something to do," he said.



Evan Newport looks up at his father, Scott, as he sits in one of Scott's homemade chairs. (Mirror photo by David Reed)

Since Evan has lived past the doctors' expectations, Newport said, there is no way to guess how much longer he may live. Making the furniture helps Newport cope, but so does nurse Terri Wood who is at the family's home five days a week to help mum Penni take care of Evan. Another nurse comes every night.

Foundation Fundraiser

The Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation and Neiman Marcus of Troy will present "Fall into Fashion," a charity brunch and fashion show from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 12.

The event will take place at Neiman Marcus' Zodiac Cafe (located on the third floor at the Somerset Collection) and costs \$75 per person. To attend, contact Jennifer Ghandour at 586-247-2142 by Sept. 1.

For more information about cardiomyopathy or to make a donation, call 201-227-8852 or visit www.childrenscardiomyopathy.org

The nurses help out since the Newports have another son, 5-year-old Noah. They also have a 22-year-old daughter, Chelsea, but she lives on her own in Royal Oak.

Before bringing Evan home from the hospital, Newport built a room for him on the first floor to make it easier to care for him. In that room is Evan's crib and, next to it, a medical pole Newport made to hold Evan's ventilator and feeding tube.

Newport has learned to use other medical devices as well, so that he can care for Evan if a nurse is not there. He has learned all about Evan's condition and all of his medications, although Penni prefers not to know such facts.

"My wife, she just wants to be a mom," he said. So she does "mom things" like changing Evan's diaper and helping him stand as he tries to walk, just like any other child would.

"He's the happiest kid. He doesn't even know he's sick," Newport said. "And that's a great thing, too, to know that your kid isn't suffering."