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One of the biggest difference I have made to a life around me was to my brother. Two years ago, my 5 year old brother Joseph was about to undergo many major surgeries. He was born with fibular hemimelia and post focal femoral deficiency. Basically, this means that he was born with a short femur, no fibula, and a his knee and ankle are not formed correctly. These were only supposed to be 2 surgeries total, but due to complications, he ended up having 6 in a little over 1 year.

To help make his legs the same length, the doctors put a fixator onto his femur. A fixator is a rod and metal pins that go into his leg and slowly pull the bone apart so that new bone will grow in to make it longer. After the first surgery, he was in the hospital for about a week. When he came home, I tried my best to make him happy and comfortable, but it was really hard. The fixator was so big and the slightest bumping of it would cause him to be in a great deal of pain, more pain than he already was in. He couldn't sleep in his own bed because we couldn't carry him up the stairs, and he couldn't walk for a long time. We had to rent a hospital bed to be brought to our house. Every night my parents would have to sleep on our couch so that Joseph would get his medicine.

Even though I couldn't help by giving him his medicine or lengthening his leg, I helped Joseph in all the other ways that I could. Every morning I would come downstairs before school and help wake him up and make him breakfast. And at night, I would kiss him goodnight and tuck him in. I would whisper to him to make sure he takes his medicine good and never be mean to Mom when she gave it to him. Also, my brother and I helped him relearn how to walk. We would cheer him on and give him so many hugs and kisses when he took his steps.

Eventually, he got the fixator taken off, and we were all so happy. He was able to run, jump, and play however he wanted, until one day. He was running in his room and he stepped on his brother's football card. It turned out that he had a staph infection inside of his bone that made it weak. His bone broke and he had to go back to the hospital. The doctors put a metal rod on the inside of his leg, and he had a cast that went from his toe to his stomach.

Every morning during the summer, I would carry him down the stairs from his regular bed, and help get him breakfast. Since his cast was not water proof, he wasn't able to go swimming. Somedays, I stayed home with him and we played with his toys or the Wii U. Sometimes we would go to the park with our grandma to sit outside, but we

also stayed in the backyard and played football or home run derby. I always tried to find different ways for him to play in his wheelchair.

By doing all of this, I helped Joseph to understand that it is ok for him to have a " little leg. Now he loves that he has a little leg because he gets fun braces and shoes that make him feel special. But we make sure that he is like a normal kid. He runs, jumps, plays, and goes to school like every other kid. This year, he will be on the summer swim team with me.

Watching him go through all of this, it makes me more thankful for my health. He is a very brave kid, and I will be there to support him through every single surgery there is to come. I will continue to make a difference in his life because I love him so much!