

## Leadership Service in Action Wessington Springs Senior FCCLA Chapter 2015-2016

The FCCLA and FFA chapters coordinated a benefit for the mother of two of their members. Members of the chapters created items for the silent auction, contacted businesses and community members for donations, made soups for the supper, baked goodies for the bake sale and worked at several stations during the event. The event raised \$7,500 for Tiffany Knipfer and her family.

### Students, community pull together to help local family

#### *Benefit raises \$7500 for Springs woman burned in kitchen accident*

Last November, a typical night at work quickly turned catastrophic for Tiffany Knipfer, steering her down a painful road to recovery that she continues today.

In a kitchen accident involving scalding hot oil from a deep fryer during her shift at the Prairie Lounge in Wessington Springs, Tiffany received third degree burns on a large portion of the left side of her body.

Jerauld County Ambulance responded to the scene and transported her to Avera Weskota Memorial Hospital in Wessington Springs. Health care professionals at Avera Weskota along with Avera e-Emergency staff in Sioux Falls evaluated Tiffany and arranged for fixed-wing air transport to the burn center at Regions Hospital in St. Paul, Minn.

"With oil burns it gets under your skin and keeps burning for up to three to five days," said Tiffany. "I ended up having third degree burns on 38% of my body."

As soon as they heard about the accident, FFA and FCCLA students at Wessington Springs High School wanted to help the Knipfer family. Family and Consumer Sciences/Technology Teacher Charlotte Mohling and Agriculture Education Instructor/FFA Advisor Craig Shryock started planning and helped the kids organize a benefit held last week that included a bake sale, silent auction, soup supper and chuck-a-duck fundraiser.

"I was surprised at what all the kids had done for it and everything that was there," said Tiffany. "They definitely had a great crowd, I was impressed that there were so many on Valentine's Day."

"These kids were great, taking time out from their other activities and school," said Tiffany's husband Ryan. "With 12 soups they must have been cooking for weeks and with all the other things going on, they were busy."

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#### The road to recovery

Tiffany and Ryan arrived at the burn unit at Regions on November 5. Once the surgeon determined that no additional burns would emerge, she arranged for Tiffany to have skin grafting surgery on November 10.

"She was in surgery from 6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., over eight hours," said Ryan. "She's scheduled to have another surgery later this year, possibly in May."

While at Regions, Tiffany and Ryan would keep in touch with their children Lane, Luke and Tierney through Face Time video calls on their smart phones. "Tierney still gets nervous when we go back to St. Paul for follow up appointments," said Ryan. "She's worried we'll be gone for 11 days again."

Once home, Tiffany couldn't move on her own for two weeks. "It was horrible, I couldn't move or get up on my own," remembers Tiffany. "I had burnt both of my hands so in order to get me up, Ryan and the kids didn't have many places to grab me."

Ryan learned how to change Tiffany's burn dressings so that they could return home sooner to be with their children.

"Tierney was like a little mom once we got home," said Tiffany, smiling. "She would help Ryan do the dressings and was always trying to help."

She is under strict orders to wear burn garments for 23 hours a day. The garments serve as a compression suit to help soothe

out the skin grafts Her skin is still sensitive to the touch and she has physical therapy three times a week.

The Knipfers said that they receive a new medical bill in the mail daily and have to purchase a new burn suit every three months, with the possibility of having to wear a burn suit for up to two years.

"Our biggest expense so far has been going back and forth to St. Paul," said Ryan. "Tiffany is so uncomfortable she can't sit in one place for very long so we stop a lot. On one trip it took us 12 hours to get from Springs to Albert Lea."

For now, the Knipfers said that they are taking it one day at a time.

"It's been an experience I don't wish on anyone," said Tiffany. "It was great seeing all the support from everyone at the benefit — it really helps."



ABOVE LEFT: Jordan Hines and Seth Tebay work the bake sale at the benefit. ABOVE: Luke Knipfer and Mackenzie Rodner sold chances for "Chuck a Duck" as part of the fundraiser.