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North Texas Surgeon Credited With Saving Teen's Limbs Credited With Saving Teen's Limbs



KRISTIN WEISELL

FEBRUARY 19, 2019 - 10:24 AM



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CATEGORIES: [Local News](#), [Health](#), [Local](#)

PLANO (1080 KRLD) - A surgeon at the Texas Back Institute is getting some well-deserved kudos, as a mom credits him for saving her teen.

The Williams family says every day with their now 18-year-old son Braiden is a blessing, and Dr. Raj Arakal who was on call that night, is responsible for it.

"This was a tragedy, and I hope I never have to go through anything like that again," says Michelle Williams.

Braiden, Michelle and their family live in Achille, Oklahoma, about 25 miles north of Sherman. Last year, Braiden was on his way home from work, when an accident flipped his truck. Despite his seat belt, he was thrown 20 feet from the truck.

"I remember waking up in this pasture, and I had dirt all in my mouth," Braiden says. "I didn't remember that I was driving home. I looked around and kind of realized I was really hurt."

He was flown to Medical City of Plano, where grim news awaited.

Braiden broke 5 ribs, his sternum, his arm, and worst of all, his spine. Along with a regular fracture, he suffered what's called a burst fracture. In about 80% of burst fractures, people are left paralyzed.

"With a serious injury like that to the spinal cord, prognosis is initially pretty poor," says Dr. Arakal. "It's a reflection of the initial injury, and of how quickly we can correct the problem."

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Credit: Michelle Williams

By the time Braiden got to surgery, he had lost feeling in both legs.

"His sister just kept crying, saying 'Oh my God, what if you're paralyzed?'" Michelle remembers.

Braiden was more philosophical.

"I didn't think much about it. When they told me, I was like, well if that's what's up then I'll just have to deal with it."

Michelle will never forget her son's strength in that moment.

"He kept telling us, 'It's gonna be all right, even if I can't walk again, I'll just sit around and play my guitar,'" she says. "And it kind of calmed us down. Like if he's okay with it, then you better get okay with it too, you know?"

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from the moment they met Dr. Arakal, his compassion and calm demeanor convinced them that Braiden was in the best hands. And just hours after his surgery, their hope was rewarded.

"He moved his foot, and we all cried," Michelle says. "Nobody was expecting him to move that quickly."

That same day, Braiden moved both legs. When he came home from the hospital, he walked into the house on his own. And after months of outpatient therapy and a year of recovery, he's taken up his favorite activities: riding and roping in the rodeo.

Dr. Arakal is quick to credit a whole team with this extraordinary recovery, and of course he praises Braiden as well.

"The patient has to dedicate to getting themselves better, and kudos to Braiden for sticking with it," he says.

Michelle says Dr. Arakal was put in their path for a reason, and she'll thank him for the rest of her life for bringing her son back to full strength.

TAGS: [Medical City Of Plano](#), [hospital](#), [Health](#), [plano](#), [Texas](#), [Dr. Raj Arakal](#), [Braiden Williams](#), [Surgery](#), [Accident](#)

Jennifer Sanders

From: Cheryl Zapata
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2019 4:46 PM
To: TBI All Employees; TBI Physicians
Subject: KRLD Story on Dr. Arakal

KRLD recently did a story and radio interview with Dr. Arakal regarding a local teen he saw during trauma call and a mom who reached out to say thank you. You can find the story here:

<https://krlD.radio.com/articles/north-texas-surgeon-credited-saving-teens-limbs-credited-saving-teens-limbs>



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