

Paul Morelli

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240423



Recovery after crash a 'miracle,' man says

Realtor expects to begin rehabilitation soon following motorcycle wreck in town.

By Emma Breyse

A Jackson real estate broker is out of acute care and in rehabilitation after doctors rebuilt his spine following a motorcycle crash.

Michael Pruett, 45, had recovered enough in the week since his surgery that he was able to report his condition by phone Tuesday afternoon. His voice was faint and scratchy, but coherent.

"I am doing very well, and I am recuperating very well," Pruett said. "God has literally created a miracle."

He said his doctors at the University of Utah Hospital planned to move him into rehabilitation that afternoon, and he might return to Jackson as soon as the end of next week.

"I cannot emphasize enough that the level of support from the community has been amazing and has really played a huge role in my recovery," he said. "I just want to thank the community for their support."

Emergency responders flew Pruett to the Utah hospital following his crash July 15. He was unresponsive at the scene, and police reported he had "significant" injuries to his head and neck.

He almost immediately underwent a 10-hour surgery to repair his back, fusing his spine and repairing

damaged vertebrae.

Just days later, he was able to walk with help from hospital staff, according to Facebook updates from close friend Matt Deehan.

"I don't really have words for it," Deehan said Tuesday. "It's been a really moving experience for everyone. Miracle Man Michael Pruett."

The wreck occurred when a car turned in front of Pruett at the intersection of Milward Street and Hansen Avenue, failing to yield the right of way, according to Jackson police.

Pruett was not wearing a helmet, police said.

Police sent a witness report to the Teton County Prosecutor's office for review but later withdrew it, County Attorney Steve Weichman said.

Along with his work at Jackson Hole Real Estate Associates, Pruett is a member of the town of Jackson Planning Commission. He attends River Crossing Church in Jackson.

The church has set up a fund to help Pruett and his wife, Dawn Paxton-Pruett, with medical expenses and the ongoing costs of his rehabilitation.

Community members interested in donating can send money to River Crossing at 3205 Big Trails Drive or drop it off in person, church staff said. Donations should be marked for the Michael Pruett Fund.



Pruett

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PAWS

Continued from 16A

Act in the past.

"We have been concerned about our fifth-grade scores for a number of years," she said.

The scores from this past school year show that roughly 85 percent of fifth-grade students were proficient or advanced in math, with roughly 87 percent meeting the mark in reading. Last year, those percentages were in the 70s.

"They're really pushing toward that 90 percent" in reading, she said. "Fifth grade is a notable score for us this year."

Emphasis on literacy

Teton County elementary school students spend 90 minutes a day on literacy, Shea said. The emphasis has been in place for the last few years.

Colter elementary scores increased for reading in all grade levels. Ninety percent of fourth-grade students tested proficient or advanced. Roughly 87 percent of fifth-graders also met marks. At Kelly Elementary School, 100 percent of students were proficient in all subject areas tested for the second year in a row.

While the number of sixth-grade students proficient in reading decreased about 4 percent this year, seventh- and eighth-grade students improved in reading with percentages of students meeting the mark in the mid-80s.

The district also monitors the number of students that score "below basic" on the assessments, meaning students who do not meet fundamental benchmarks. In eighth-grade reading, no students tested below basic, Shea said. The other grade levels and content areas tested with 2 percent to about 5 percent below basic.

"We would love to have them all at 0 or 1 to 2 percent, if that," Shea said.

English language learners

The district saw its English language learner, or ELL, population make strides from the third- to fourth-grade level in reading.

Thirty-five percent of third-grade English learners met marks in reading. But in fourth grade, 68 percent of students tested as proficient or advanced.

It takes English learners several years to get comfortable with learning in a second language, Shea said.

"We're closing the achievement gap slowly," she said, knowing that it takes five to seven years to really learn a second language. "We're beginning to see those improvements at fourth grade."

PAWS is a "lag indicator" that helps the district determine what it will continue to do and what it will build on in the next year, Shea said.

"It gives us confirmation of what we've done in the past," she said. "We're seeing improvement on our students reading throughout the year."

PAWS scores for progress

The state will release adequate yearly progress results next week, which will determine if districts met federal improvement benchmarks.

Technical problems with the on-line portion of the 2009-10 tests made the Wyoming Department of Education seek a federal waiver to not use those results to determine adequate yearly progress.

Math and reading tests are required under 2001's No Child Left Behind Act and are used to determine whether schools and districts make "adequate yearly progress." Under the federal mandate, students must be 100 percent proficient in math and language arts by 2014. This year, the Wyoming Department of Education asked for a waiver that would dismiss the state from new federal standards to work on its education accountability system.

Shea is still unsure about the status of the state's waiver and if that will impact this year's progress determinations, she said.

Certain subgroups of students at Colter and Davey Jackson elementary schools and Jackson Hole Middle School did not meet federal requirements last year.