

Christy

*By Pete Clark*

In high school, my granddaughter, Christina Ott, known as Christy, was an excellent student, a member of National Honor Society, the swimming team and the school band. She earned spending money by working as a lifeguard at the local swimming pool during her summer breaks. When she graduated from high school in Lyman, Wyoming in May, 2009, she was awarded a full scholarship to the University of Wyoming. She began her education at Wyoming with a major in Pre-Veterinary Animal Science but later changed her major to Foreign Affairs. Having shown an aptitude for the Japanese language, she was sent to Japan in May of 2012 for several weeks of intensive training in that language.

Tuesday, July 17, 2012, shortly after 9:00pm, the telephone at my house on Lansing Street began to ring. It was not that late in the evening, but my mind jumped to the concept that bad news travels by moonlight. The call did not bring bad news: The call brought devastating news. My daughter Lori, Christy's mother, was on the other end of the line and told me things I did not want to hear. Christy had left Laramie that day in route to Fort Collins, Colorado, southbound on US 287, with rain, the highway wet and slick. Christy's car had skidded beneath the trailer of a northbound rig, not too far north of the Colorado State Line. A rescue team worked for more than two hours to carefully remove her from the wreckage: during this time she suffered a stroke.

Christy was flown by helicopter to Cheyenne, Wyoming, arriving there with a severe brain injury, multiple broken bones, deep lacerations and bits of glass embedded in her skin. When the Wyoming doctors had done all they could, Christy was loaded onto a helicopter and sent to Denver Health Trauma Center in Colorado. Christy's grandmother and her husband were at Denver Health when the helicopter arrived there. Lori arrived at the hospital in the early morning hours, driven the four hundred plus miles in her car by a friend from the Bridger Valley. That morning I went into work and told my supervisor what had happened and that I was leaving for the hospital. A friend said she would take the day off and drive my car to Denver Health and have her daughter pick her up there. When I arrived at the Trauma Center, Christy was wires, tubes and bandages.

Lori seemed to be holding up well, managing the enormous stress of that appalling situation. Ashley, Christy's younger sister had come with her mother and was determined to protect Christy from those who might be too curious. The next day a group of Christy's friends from the Bridger Valley and UW arrived to support Christy and her family. People from across the United States and from far flung places around the world supported Christy, prayed for her. Prayers for Christy are not unanswered prayers. They are not yet answered prayers.