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## **Matthew Sherertz (Age 31)**

**Son Of Chris Sherertz,  
Alliance Engineering**



On June 5, 1992, at the age of 17, Matthew was critically injured in a motorcycle accident. He was life flighted to Hermann Hospital, where Dr. James H. "Red" Duke and his trauma team performed five major surgeries in a nine hour operation in an effort to save his life. The surgeries resulted in Matthew having most of his stomach removed, more than half of his pancreas removed (which makes enzymes to digest his food), his entire duodenum removed (where nutrients get taken into the body) and his spleen and right kidney removed. He is the first person Dr. Duke has seen survive such devastating injuries. It took him two years to complete his senior year of high school while recuperating from the injuries and surgeries. In September of 1996, at the age of 21, complications from the 1992 surgeries resulted in his common bile duct closing up from scar tissue and causing a massive infection in his gall bladder. Again, he almost died. After a three week stay in the hospital and home health care for three months, he became strong enough to withstand surgery in December of 1996. Dr. Red Duke removed his gall bladder and opened up the common bile duct in a six hour operation. Matthew spent the next five months recuperating from this surgery. He tried to attend college several times but was not able to stay healthy long enough to continue and graduate.

Since 2001, his health has gradually deteriorated to the point that living has become a struggle. The trauma to his digestive system has severely affected Matthew's ability to take in nourishment and has left him with severe back pain. He suffers with bile reflux and episodes of severe vomiting that can last for days. He cannot drink liquids without experiencing nausea and can tolerate very few foods, except small amounts of yogurt and bread, Gatorade and High Protein Boost. He has chronic dehydration and some signs of malnutrition.

Matthew also suffered severe damage to his upper mouth, resulting in loss of bone and four teeth in the 1992 accident. Starting in the fall of 1992, over a two-year period, he has several dental surgeries, including bone grafting to build up the bone to accept dental implants, which were put in place in 1994. In 2000, the implants failed and had to be surgically removed with additional surgeries to put in additional bone grafts. Implants were surgically placed in late 2001 but have caused problems. He currently needs medical procedures performed to try to save the implants and he may eventually have to have the implants surgically removed with additional bone grafting and a special bridge made.

Matthew's doctors have said that he is permanently and completely disabled from all employment. Due to frequent vomiting, generally poor physical condition and pain, he can not meaningfully participate in a work environment despite his intelligence. He has frequent lengthy doctor's appointments and may require other surgeries and nutritional interventional procedures in the future, like intravenous nutrition.

Matthew is not able to work, does not have health insurance and receives his only health care through the Harris County Hospital District. The LBJ Hospital administrator admits that HCHD does not meet the needs of patients with

complicated cases like Matthew presents. He seldom sees the same doctor twice so no one gets to know his case well enough to try to figure out how to help him with his many health problems. The HCHD does not offer the dental care that he requires for his dental implants.

Matthew needs monetary assistance so that he can see a maxillofacial specialist and a prosthodontist to attend to his implants and try to save them. The first procedure suggested will cost a minimum of \$3000. If the dental implants have to be removed and a bridge put in it will cost a minimum of \$30,000, since surgery in the hospital is required. Routine care costs about \$550 each year. He also needs to see a gastroenterologist and other specialists outside the HCHD who specialize in complicated cases like Matthew's presents. Each visit will cost about \$450 plus tests. We have spent well over \$70,000 in medical expenses for him in the past. We continue to try to give Matthew hope that we will find a doctor who will have the knowledge and interest to help him get back some quality of life.