

Tragedy in Omaha

Life had taken an exciting turn for Mike Poppen, maintenance man at Remington Heights Retirement Community in Omaha, Nebraska, since June of 1999. Several months ago, he and his wife, Linda, heard the news that she was pregnant. It had to be a miracle, they reasoned, because they have been married for more than 20 years and had been told that they were not able to have children.

The baby is due in April, and he and Linda have been busy making preparations for this very special time in their lives. Since the couple is expecting a son, Mike had searched to find just the right toy pickup truck for him to play with.

Then last Tuesday – a week ago today – tragedy struck. Early that morning, Mike was getting ready to leave for work when his pickup truck began making strange noises. Apparently, he got out of the truck, and lifted the hood to see what was wrong when a part of the engine detached and struck him in the head. A neighbor heard the explosion and immediately called 911.

Mike was rushed to Creighton Hospital, where two neurosurgeons performed immediate surgery. He had suffered severe damage to the front part of his skull. Since then, he has been kept in a medically induced coma in order to stabilize any swelling or pressure in the brain.

Amy Birkel, the general manager at Remington Heights, reports that Mike has pneumonia, but “doctors say this is common for someone on a respirator for several days.” She said the plan is to take him off medication that is keeping him in a coma, and doctors will attempt to assess the extent of damage he may have suffered. “There is still quite a bit of swelling in the brain, but the fever is down.”

Residents at Remington Heights, “who all think the world of Mike,” Birkel said, bought a huge get-well card “and have written all over it.”

As might be expected, with the loss of his work, the Poppen family is facing some tough times financially. A support fund has been established by the associates of Remington Heights. If you would like to help, checks should be made payable to the Mike (Charles) Poppen Fund, and mailed to American National Bank, 8990 West Dodge Road, Omaha, Nebraska 68114-3383.

Your prayers for Mike and his family are especially needed.

--Beecher Hunter

