

# Cerebral Palsy Hero



Tyler Sexton has had 16 surgeries due to cerebral palsy.

Doctors said he likely wouldn't even live past birth, but Tyler Sexton has spent the past 18 years beating a lot of odds. He has a form of cerebral palsy that affects him from the waist down, so he needs a service dog to keep from falling down. He's also undergone 15 surgeries to help him walk. Even so, Tyler says he looks at his disability as a positive that's allowed him to impact many peoples' lives. Tyler's main focus is on the children at Tampa's Shriners hospital. He and his dog, Danny, started out volunteering in the pet therapy program, but when the childlife therapists saw how much the kids thrived around him, they urged Tyler to come on full time as a childlife aide. The therapists say Tyler is a great influence on the children there, many of whom have a disability themselves. Tyler says his mission is to make sure the kids have a positive outlook and know they can overcome anything. Tyler also spreads his message of hope in Riverview where he helps hand out free food to migrant workers in the mornings. Somehow, he also finds time to give motivational speeches around the country, and take part in MOSI programs that teach kids science. Tyler plans to keep up his good work with children. He's entering medical school next year, and plans to specialize in pediatrics.

# Tampa Bay's Hero of the Year

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Bay News 9 honors Everyday Heroes at annual luncheon.

They're the people who go above and beyond every day, giving back to their communities and their neighbors.

That's why Bay News 9 wanted to show all of our 2007 Everyday Hero honorees just how much they're appreciated by the Bay Area community.

They were all invited to our third annual 'Salute to Everyday Heroes Luncheon' at the A la Carte Pavilion in Tampa.

Certain heroes were given special awards in separate categories.

Our Education Heroes, Lee Teharte and Corey Thornton, were recognized for their unique rap program with a positive message that they perform at local schools.

Five year old Patrick Covington was chosen by viewers as the People's Choice Hero for saving his little sister from drowning.

Postal carrier Joey Rodriguez helped save a man's life after he'd severed his fingers and was honored as our Public Service Hero.

Our Medical Hero, Dr. Mitsie Vargas, is a local veterinarian who supplied Polk county police departments with K-9 bulletproof vests.

College student Katie Holloway won Volunteer Hero for creating a summer camp for homeless children and high school student Christina Crane was dubbed Young Hero for collecting hundreds of dollars for a family who lost everything in a fire.

Finally, we named Tyler Sexton our Hero of the Year for not allowing his cerebral palsy to keep him from doing volunteer work at Shriner's Hospital and with migrant families, and attending medical school.

The 3rd Annual luncheon was sponsored by Outback Steakhouse and all the heroes received gift certificates to the restaurant.