

THE_BLOG

What It Mean to Be a Mom

As moms, we want to protect our kids from everything. We'd love to find a cure for bullying, a cure to stop our kid's heartbreak and a cure for feeling lonely. Can you imagine how hard it would be to try to find a cure to keep your child alive?

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One day, my son came to me and told me that there was a boy at school teasing him. It was causing him distress because he was young and didn't have the self-confidence to stand up for himself. My mama bear instincts kicked in and to be honest, I wanted to go to the school and berate the little bully until he cried. Now, that may not be politically correct, and of course I wouldn't do that, but as moms, when our child is being hurt by anyone or anything, we go a little off the deep end, even if we only get to destroy the accused in our dreams.

Beginning on October 21st, there's a new documentary airing on HBO titled "Life According to Sam." It's the story of Sam, a boy who at the age of 2, was diagnosed with Progeria. Progeria is a progressive aging disorder that has no cure. It's very rare and children who have Progeria age exponentially quicker than everyone else. By the time they're a teenager, their bones, heart and other organs work as that of a 70 or 80-year-old. Children with Progeria usually die of a heart attack or stroke by the average age of 13.

Sam Berns is a remarkable young man whose life is filled with challenges far beyond your average bully, because Sam is being bullied by his internal organs. At the time of the filming of the documentary, Sam was a 14 year old kid who just wanted to be seen like any other kid doing normal things. Sam attends a mainstream high school, wins awards for academics and even participates in the marching band. Sam's ability to lead a normal life and find happiness in so many things is a tribute to his parents and especially his mother, Dr. Leslie Gordon. Dr. Leslie Gordon is the mama bear of all mama bears. Leslie, determined to cure Progeria, has started her own foundation raising money to fight the disease. This determination leads her not only to research the disease, but also to find a drug that might help these kids. Leslie races against time to save not only Sam, but all the other children afflicted with Progeria. At the same time she's working hard for Sam's health, she's also helping to make sure Sam's life is as normal as possible. While this documentary can be heart-breaking at times; it's also incredibly uplifting to watch Sam's parents deal with a situation that would overwhelm most of us.

As parents, we give our kids advice on how to be successful in their academic and social life. No matter who we are, or who our children are, as parents we want to instill good qualities in them. We push hard work, being kind, and treating other people with respect. Dr. Leslie Gordon and her husband, Dr. Scott Berns, have raised Sam with these values, and Sam has not only risen to the occasion, but far exceeded it. Sam doesn't let his limitations act as an obstacle; he sees them as just one more thing he needs to push past. Sam doesn't want you to feel sorry for him. He just wants you to see him as a whole person, and although Progeria is part of that whole, it doesn't define him. Sam has confidence and social skills beyond what you would expect. His parents don't hide or isolate him; they let him have the best life he can possibly have for as long as he can have it.

As moms, we want to protect our kids from everything. We'd love to find a cure for bullying, a cure to stop our kid's heartbreak and a cure for feeling lonely. Can you imagine how hard it would be to try to find a cure to keep your child alive? Until I watched "Life According to Sam", I hadn't thought about what that would take. Sam Berns is an inspiration and his amazing mother, Dr. Leslie Gordon, shows us what being a mother is really all about.

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