
Grace Defied The Odds





BY MICHELLE BOUDREAU

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On March 6, 1999 Shannon Kenitz gave birth to a beautiful baby girl named Grace. As happy as any parent would be to welcome another addition to their family, Shannon's cheerfulness began to fade as she noticed a drastic change in her child. Grace wasn't eating well and her eyes began to roll frequently. Grace was later diagnosed with a rare mitochondrial disorder and suffered repeated seizures. Shannon visited with several physicians and explored various therapies for Grace, but Grace's condition turned life threatening.

Subsequently, Grace was put on a feeding tube, lost her vision, was unable to walk and was on 42 different medications. After Shannon and her eldest daughter, Lily, lived in a hospital for three years monitoring Grace's condition, the hospital won the right to take Grace off life support as Shannon had exhausted all the insurance the state offered. As a last effort to save her daughter's life, Shannon heard about hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) through a national parent-to-parent network called MUMS.

After learning about the various benefits others experienced with HBOT, Shannon quickly visited with Grace's primary pediatrician and asked for a prescription. Shockingly, as opposed to helping the mother save her daughter, the doctor (who was unfamiliar with HBOT) wrote on his prescription pad, "Feed Grace styrofoam three times a day and she will get better." Shannon's disgust with her doctor fueled her obsession to get the therapy Grace so desperately needed. Shannon visited with another doctor and finally obtained a prescription for HBOT.

Shortly after, Shannon took Grace out of the hospital and drove to Florida, where Grace would begin HBOT. Miraculously, after 17 sessions Grace grabbed her mother's hand for the first time. Grace was finally showing improvement, both physically and cognitively. As Shannon and her two daughters found themselves practically living in another hospital, Shannon knew she had to get back to home to save her marriage.

Upon arriving back in Wisconsin, Shannon was fast at work saving her marriage after saving her daughter's life. However, four weeks into being back home, Grace started to sleep 18 hours a day and when examined by doctors, they confirmed that Grace's brain was shutting down. Again, doctors were convinced that Grace would not survive. Shannon knew she had to bring HBOT to Wisconsin and ultimately to Grace. In only 12 weeks, Shannon managed to gain corporate sponsors and opened her own hyperbaric clinic in Madison; where Grace defied the odds, yet again, and regained neurological function.

Grace's story was the catalyst for Shannon to begin speaking at medical and parent conferences to help inform other families with children suffering from similar conditions, about the benefits of HBOT. One year later, Shannon was returning home from speaking at an autism conference and found herself greeted by not only her family, but also multiple news cameras in the Madison airport. To her amazement, Grace got out of her wheelchair and walked to her mother for the first time in her life. Proving, once more, the power of Grace and Shannon's determination and what HBOT can accomplish.

Grace Kenitz, is a special needs warrior child with strength and determination. She continues to reach one milestone after another, as she just attended her junior prom, very typical for most juniors in high school, however not for most special needs children. Grace continues to beat the odds with her achievements and Shannon attributes the milestones to Grace's HBOT treatments. She feels if it were not for the HBOT treatments, Grace would not have survived. Shannon consistently gives credit to HBOT for Grace's story of hope and life style that typical children can enjoy. It started with Grace's focus, her walking out of her wheel chair, speaking, to attending public school, celebrating her sweet 16th birthday party and even attending school dances.

Grace started her sophomore year of high school in Madison Wisconsin, when Shannon was faced with making the tough decision of enrolling Grace in public school. It was a day Shannon Kenitz never imagined would happen, after Grace being out of public school since 3rd grade. Shannon feels this decision is always harder when you have kids with special needs. Grace had her Photo ID taken and her mom met her team, just like all the other kids. She is now a senior in school, taking the bus with her backpack and all. The first day of school proved very emotional for Shannon, however she is confident as she believes James Madison Memorial Public School is a brilliant example of the education and care for special needs children.

Shannon Kenitz is a special needs advocate who has captured national attention and is considered a "Warrior Mom" inspiring many other mothers, including Jenny McCarthy of The View fame. Jenny: "I would describe Shannon as a mother warrior, truly one of the most incredible mother warriors I have ever met; she is my inspiration and she keeps me going!"

Shannon is a nationally recognized speaker and has been the keynote speaker at many national conferences such as United States Autism and Asperger Association, National Autism Association, Autism One and Talk about Curing Autism (TACA). She has received many rewards and honors for her work in the field of hyperbaric medicine. Kenitz received national attention after she appeared on The Montel Williams Show to talk about how HBOT saved her daughter's life.

She is also the Executive Director of the International Hyperbarics Association. The IHA (International Hyperbaric Association) is a registered 501c3 dedicated to informing and educating physicians, in addition to the public at large, on Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT). Since its inception in 2002, the IHA has dedicated its efforts to disseminating landmark research, issuing grants to patients in need and hosting continued medical education accredited symposiums. Through these efforts, the IHA has remained an active leader in furthering HBOT's role in modern medicine.

Shannon has been working in the field of hyperbaric medicine since 2003 as a prominent advocate for the treatment of special needs children. Her passion to help others was motivated by Grace. With her recovery through the use of HBOT, Grace defied the odds and numerous doctors, which served as the catalyst for Shannon to begin her journey to inform other families about the treatment. Shannon's work has engaged the interest of people from all walks of life and led her to the U.S. capital to present how the future of hyperbaric medicine can improve the quality of life for thousands of people living with various neurological conditions. In addition, she accepted the position of Executive Director of the Medical Academy of Pediatrics and Special Needs (MAPS), MAPS is a fellowship program for Physicians and other like-minded complementary practitioners, under the guidance of Daniel Rossignol, M.D., FAAFP, for more information visit: [medmaps.org](http://www.medmaps.org) (<http://www.medmaps.org>).

Shannon is asked often about the treatment of HBOT and she feels it is her mission to help other parents and share the information she has gained over 17 years. The primary mechanism of action of HBOT is reducing inflammation and enhancing cellular activity to promote the body's innate ability to repair and regenerate. HBOT has been shown to be a promising intervention for a wide array of conditions and recent clinical investigation has demonstrated it's efficacy to aid in the treatment of several off label conditions including traumatic brain injuries, autism, CP, stroke, Lyme disease, sports-related injuries, anti-aging, cancer, diabetes and much more. Additionally, a growing number of high profile personalities and sport figures/teams are endorsing HBOT as more research and physician reported successes have fostered cutting-edge developments in accelerating healing and enhancing quality of life.

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) is the medical use of oxygen in a pressurized environment, at a level higher than one (1) atmosphere absolute (sea level). Increased pressure allows oxygen to dissolve and saturate more effectively in the blood system, primarily the plasma, which has been shown to yield a broad variety of positive physiological, biochemical and cellular effects. This non-invasive therapy is considered by many to be the most trusted and safest way to increase oxygen delivery to all organs of the body. The typical treatment lasts for 60 to 90 minutes, during which the patient lies down and breathes normally.

Shannon states: "I decided on a Oxyhealth chamber after speaking to several other parents, and even some physicians, I quickly got the picture if I wanted a safe chamber for my daughter then OxyHealth would be my choice. I can call anytime of day 24 / 7 and get a real person on the line, to me that means everything. It makes me feel secure knowing that they stand behind their product and they are still there for you after the purchase. As a mom, I want to know when I am in the chamber with Grace we are well cared for and we will have this therapy for years to come, I feel that I have this with my OxyHealth chamber... That is a company I trust with my daughters life."

(<https://www.eparent.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/212.png>) Shannon resides in Madison, Wisconsin with her two daughters Lily and Grace; her message is one of hope and possibilities for all children and adults with special needs. For more information on HBOT, or to contact Shannon Kenitz, visit: [IHAUSA.org](http://www.IHAUSA.org) (<http://www.IHAUSA.org>), call: 877-IHA-USA1 or email: skenitz@ihausa.org (<mailto:skenitz@ihausa.org>) •



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Michelle Boudreau is a national bestselling author who has been considered for a Pulitzer Prize nomination. She is a UCLA alumni, and media journalist, authoring numerous publications. Boudreau has 16 years experience as a consumer product specialist, focusing on health product awareness.

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