



Headline: High Point lacrosse strikes gold with Makayla Compton

By Michael J. Lewis

There are shopping trips and birthday parties in her honor, and Makayla Compton loves those events very much.

But for a teenage girl “stuck” with an older brother and no female siblings, having the High Point (N.C.) women’s lacrosse team as her best buddies has been the best gift of all.

“This team has just picked up my daughter, picked her up so much,” says Brian Compton, Makayla’s Dad. “With open arms from day one, and it’s been so beautiful.”

Makayla, now 17, suffered from headaches and ear pain in the spring of 2011, and parents Brian and Lacey didn’t know exactly what was wrong. Nor did doctors, until they ordered a CT scan and found a medullablastoma, a large brain tumor, in her head.

Within two days, surgery was scheduled at world-famous Duke Medical Center, about 90 minutes from the Compton’s home in Lexington, N.C. Ninety-five percent of the tumor was removed, but after surgery Makayla was unable to speak, and she’s been wheelchair-bound ever since as well. But after 30 radiation sessions and four high doses of chemotherapy, Makayla has improved to the point where this past November, it’s been four years of “clear scans” for her.

Soon after the surgery, Makayla says, a social worker told the family about Friends of Jaclyn.

Makayla was adopted in Dec., 2013 by High Point, first by the women's basketball team before settling in with the women's lacrosse team.

The lacrosse squad had previous experience with FOJ thru Mason LaVack, a young boy who sadly passed away in 2011.

"We actually got to meet Mason's father, and he told us how close the team got to him," Brian says. "We understood it might be hard for High Point to start over (with a new adoptee.)"

On adoption day, Makayla said she was a little unsure what to expect.

"I didn't know what it was going to be like, because the girls were older and I didn't know them," Makayla says. "But then Coach (Lyndsey Boswell) was so sweet and great right away, and the rest of the team, too."

For Makayla, who regained the ability to speak during her recovery, the friendship with High Point has meant a team of big sisters who can help her through anything.

When asked who her favorite players on the team are, she replied "All of them!" Besides the shopping trips, the Panthers' players have taught Makayla the finer points of lacrosse, and given her a front-row seat on the bench for games.

For her 16th birthday in October, 2014, the team had a party for her and got her cake and presents, and they constantly stay in touch with Makayla throughout the year.

As so often happens, unfortunately, with children like Makayla, maintaining friendships with schoolmates is hard when you're in and out of the hospital for a while, so Brian and Lacey are grateful that High Point's team has stepped in and done so much for their daughter.

"A lot of her friends didn't really know how to 'handle' Makayla and her illness," Brian said. "But having that bond with these girls has been something Makayla really needs."

"They are all my sisters," Makayla said. "They're all family to me."

