

Editorial..... 6
 Calendar 13, 17
 Sports 15, 16
 Directory..... 21, 22
 Classifieds23-25



FARMLAND VANISHING

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PAGE 3



COMEBACK KIDS

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PAGE 15

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A profile in courage

Teen determined not to let cancer keep her off the volleyball court

By **LISA TALLYN**
 Staff Writer

No one would blame Moriah Kolenda for feeling sorry for herself or being depressed after losing a leg to cancer and having to undergo potent chemotherapy treatments over the past few months. But Moriah has tried hard not to react to her situation that way.

While the 16-year-old Georgetown girl who was diagnosed with last year with osteosarcoma—the same cancer that Canadian icon Terry Fox had—admits she has her low moments, she talks herself out of them and moves on.

“I think I’m very determined,” said Moriah. “But without my faith and having that thing to hold onto, and that hope, I wouldn’t be this far. I don’t want to sit around being depressed, I want to go back to what I was doing before.”

And even though she is still in and out of hospital undergoing treatment Moriah is getting there, much faster than anyone expected.

Way ahead of schedule she is walking with an artificial leg because she pushed for one early, and despite the

fact they take a lot of getting used to, Moriah was able to walk between parallel bars immediately after her prosthetists fitted her with one.

“I just wanted to get up as soon as I could, move on and get past all this to be able to walk and run without thinking about it,” said Moriah.

She’s working toward her goals of running, playing volleyball and snowboarding.

Her knee pain started back in September 2008, but it took nearly a year before she was finally diagnosed.

An avid volleyball player, her doctors assumed it was a sports injury and prescribed her anti-inflammatory medication.

Results of an X-ray in February 2009 came back

normal, however she was in such pain she couldn’t sleep at night, and there was a visible bump on her knee. She was prescribed morphine.

By last September she was back at the doctor’s office again with her mom Karen who insisted they weren’t leaving until something was done for her daughter. Blood was drawn and X-rays

‘I don’t want to sit around being depressed, I want to go back to what I was doing before.’
—Moriah Kolenda

Karen Kolenda poses with her daughter Moriah at their Georgetown home. Moriah, 16, was diagnosed last year with osteosarcoma and had to have her left leg amputated. However, that is not stopping the Christ the King student and volleyball fanatic from intending to try out for the school team this fall.
 Photo by Ted Brown

See TEEN, pg. 8

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