

By Danielle Ray

35-year-old Bolton resident Kevin White was enjoying a beautiful sunny day in Boston watching the marathon at the finish line with his parents on April 15 when the unthinkable happened – two bombs exploded, changing his life, and the lives of so many others, forever.

Kevin and his parents got separated in the chaos that ensued after the bombs went off, and ended up being transported to different hospitals - it took a full day to find out how each other was faring, or if they were even alive. His father endured injuries so severe that he eventually lost his leg; Kevin and his mother sustained serious shrapnel wounds and burns.

“At the time I thought a power transformer must have blown but when I hear the second bomb go off I realized that it was something far worse,” Kevin recalled. “My thoughts in the ambulance were trying to come to the reality that my parents were probably dead given what I had seen at the site of the bombing.”

Like so many others in the days and weeks immediately following the horrific event, Kevin and his family were recipients of a donation from the Greg Hill Foundation. Funds raised specifically for the bombing victims were distributed in a record amount of time, meeting the immediate needs of so many of the innocent victims.

The Greg Hill Foundation got in touch with Kevin via phone about two weeks after the bombing, right as his dad was being transferred to the Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital; Adam Benoit, who works for the company that helps run the foundation, drove to Spaulding with a check in hand for them.

“Honestly, the first four weeks were kind of a blur with media and people wanting to help out and me personally having to deal with everyone,” Kevin said. “I do remember being very impressed at how fast the Greg Hill Foundation reacted and how selfless they were in reaching out to our family at a time when it was really chaos.”

Kevin said the donation mean a lot because they were in a day to day situation regarding his father’s health and “righting the family ship, so to speak” - his father had been in charge of all of the family’s finances, including for Kevin and his brother, so Kevin basically had to start from scratch when it came to sorting out and paying all the bills.

“The donation meant a lot because while our family was in crisis mode it didn’t stop bills from coming in that needed to be paid as well as getting back and forth to Boston almost every day,” Kevin said. “In short it gave us one less thing to worry about as there was plenty on a day to day basis that was occupying our life. The donation helped provide a cushion in the weeks and months following as we were continuing to grapple with what had happened. It let us not worry about bills and focus more on each one of our recoveries.”

Physically, Kevin is nearly 100% recovered, as is his mother, but they both still have pieces of metal in their bodies and Kevin suffered ligament damage in his lower body that will never be the same again. Their eardrums were punctured, but those have healed. Kevin suffered a concussion, a seizure, and another concussion in a short amount of time. "There are days and times I still feel out of it," he said.

Kevin's father is adapting to his new leg, which has been a challenge at some points, but he has made a lot of progress from where he was four months ago according to Kevin.

"Mentally I feel like we all are in different stages of recovery," Kevin said of himself and his parents. "I have accepted the fact everything happened but there are days where little things spook me a bit. But I have found that being around people and meeting new people has really helped. Emotionally, the bombing will always be a part of our lives and we have accepted that. The question is now turning a negative into a positive which I feel like we are doing."

Kevin said his life has changed in many ways since that fateful April day. He took care of his parents for six months, which he said gave him an entirely new view on responsibility and patience.

"I would say however the biggest change was understanding that life is really short and being angry is just not a way to live," Kevin said. "It has made me really appreciate friendship [and] many of my friends were extremely supportive, as well as the community and the GHF. My day to day has never been normal and never will be but the bombing helped me realize that I need to take time out of every day to appreciate what [is] around me."

Kevin is transitioning to a new job by the end of the year, and recently signed a lease on a place in Boston that he will occupy at the end of the year. He said his social life "borders on non-existent" because most of his childhood friends have kids that keep them busy, and also due in part to all the time he has spent taking care of his parents.

One decision Kevin has made is to run the Boston Marathon on Monday, April 21, 2014, on Patriot's Day, for the Greg Hill Foundation.

"It has been a pleasure to get to know the people at the GHF and I look forward to continuing to train and run with them as painful as it might be physically," he said. "The training is difficult and painful but in some ways fun. I am training with the GHF foundation as well as several other charities all of which are helping individual efforts for people and families that need support and I am so happy to train with the five others at the GHF. I really feel like they are part of our family as well. It is a long training cycle but it is much easier to do it with them and the whole collective marathon collation team."

At the most basic, Kevin said all he can really say to the Greg Hill Foundation for their generosity is thank you.

"It is really hard to put into words how your family appreciates the GHF and those that gave to us over the last [several] months," he said. "Sometimes you get so numb from being in hospitals for a month and a half almost nonstop that when you do get a moment to grasp the thoughtfulness and caring that individuals can show to basically strangers it can be overwhelming and heartwarming as well."

“People have told us we are inspirational because of what we went through but in all honestly the people that are really inspirational are those, like the GHF, that took time and money to reach out and help someone or a family that really needed a hand.”