



Former Patient One of the Fraternity's Youngest Potentates

Drew Borske remembers the day he was a young patient at Shriners Hospitals for Children — Chicago and he first encountered a group of Shriners.

“I met these wonderful men with red fezzes on, and they were the nicest people,” he recalls. “I knew one day I had to join.”

Born without the lower part of his right arm, Borske started treatment at the hospital when he was just six months old and continued receiving care there until he was 19. He still looks upon those years with fondness and credits the hospital staff for giving him the unique prosthetic devices he often needed to enjoy an active childhood.

In January, at the age of 39, Borske became Potentate (president) of Sesostri Shriners in Roca, Neb. He is among the youngest Potentates in Shriners International's history, and his experience as a former patient gives him a unique appreciation for the medical care provided by the fraternity's official philanthropy, Shriners Hospitals for Children.

“I loved going to the hospital because of the people and care I received,” he said. “The doctors, nurses and staff were always friendly. I felt they listened to me and considered my recommendations. There was never an attitude that ‘we can't do that.’”

As a teen, Borske played soccer; and when he wanted to play tennis, hospital staff developed a special prosthetic device so he could serve the tennis ball. When he wanted to play ball with his father, they created a prosthetic attachment so he could catch the ball. Borske joined his school's gymnastics team, and his frequent handstands often damaged his prosthetic hand.

“I was a rather rambunctious boy and often destroyed my prosthetics,” Borske said.

The doctors didn't discourage him, though. Instead, they told him to “keep doing what you're doing and we'll keep fixing them.”

The idea to become a Shiner always remained in the back of Borske's mind. When he was 29 years old, he decided to act on the idea during a quick stop at a local store where Sesostri Shriners were hosting Shriners Hospital Awareness Day.

“I asked a few of them, ‘how do I become a Shiner?’” he recalls. “Their eyes got as big as

saucers.” The next day, Borske filled out the paperwork, and four years later, he was already a member of the Sesostri board.

Borske has referred patients to Shriners Hospitals for Children for care, including a neighbor boy who still had difficulty walking after two surgeries to correct his clubfoot. Doctors told the boy's mother nothing else could be done.

“I told her, ‘I'm a Shiner, and I know we can help him,’” Borske said. The boy received treatment at Shriners Hospitals for Children — Twin Cities, and today he walks fine, Borske said.

For Borske, the most rewarding aspect of being a Shiner has been transporting patients to the hospital in Minneapolis.

“It's very moving for me,” he said. “Taking another patient to receive care probably has been the most fulfilling part of my life.”

As the new Sesostri Potentate, Borske plans to increase community awareness of Shriners International and the hospitals it supports. He was a recent guest on a local radio show promoting the 64th Annual Sesostri Shrine Circus, held in March. He is also recognizing nobles and their ladies for their efforts. Instead of a Potentate's Ball, he decided to have a Nobility Ball and a special Ladies Appreciation Dinner.

“We're letting the nobility know that they are the special ones,” Borske said.

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Sesostri Shriners Potentate Drew Borske entertains a young girl during the 64th Annual Sesostri Shrine Circus, held in March.