



Lowman/Manning Family Story

A mighty force was delivered unto us, we knew that he was pure, he showed us he was strong, we named him River.

When River Puha Tambi Lowman was born January 7, 2005 with “s y n d r o m e - l i k e” characteristics, his doctors gave him an “uncertain” prognosis. Despite being full-term, he had difficulty eating and breathing, much like that of a baby born too soon. After 55 days in the NICU, we brought River home to the Duck Valley Indian Reservation, with a diagnosis of Noonan’s Syndrome, a rare genetic condition involving chromosome 11. Although we were told of people living with this genetic condition, doctors told us they had never seen a baby like River, as the expressions of the syndrome were very strong. It has been almost five years since we made that first trip home with River in our care. Since that time, there have been many 300 mile round trips to and from Boise, some of which were by helicopter on life flight. In September of 2006 we came within minutes of losing River. Breathing with the help of a tracheotomy tube and a ventilator and needing intense physical and occupational therapy, River’s ability to live independently was questionable. After numerous attempts to bring River home to his supportive community and sacred homelands, we decided that staying in Boise through the winter of 2006 would be our safest option. We wanted the best for our special boy; to be looked after in a home atmosphere where he could grow and develop with his loving family by his side. However, River was most stable in the hospital where he was cared for by professional staff, and our home and our family were 150 miles away. We turned to the Ronald McDonald House for help.

When River came into our lives, we were shown the true nature of the human spirit. We felt it through the prayers of our home community and loved ones, and we witnessed it through the staff at the hospital and the Ronald McDonald House. To say that we were surrounded by goodness is an understatement. The support, comfort, compassion, and love so generously extended to us during our time of need were truly uplifting. At our time of hardship and uncertainty we asked for help, which was granted to us in the form of human kindness. Due to his respiratory needs, River required the use of several machines to keep him alive. For 7 months our family stayed at the Ronald McDonald House.

We are happy to report that he lives each day to his fullest potential, in his home surroundings, with the caregivers who love him most: his family. Today our River Boy continues to amaze his medical team: they credit his progress to his home environment. We could not have done it without the help of our extended family at the Ronald McDonald House, who still, to this day, welcome us with open arms, warm smiles, and best wishes. We love them all very much!!

The spirit of volunteerism, generosity, and compassion of the House has inspired us to share our story and our support with members of our home community as well.

The Lowman/Manning Family