

## Make every day count

BY MARTY WHITFORD / Editor-in-Chief

**J**ust a few days after Thanksgiving, he was given a death sentence. Doctors told Adam Gaspar, my friend since the first grade and a 41-year-old father of six ages 21 to 10, he has a glioblastoma multiforme — a grade IV malignant brain tumor. In early December, a surgeon removed 80% of a “daughter” tumor in Adam’s cerebellum, but it was too risky to remove the rest or to touch the primary tumor invading his brain stem.

Adam’s waging a war for his life — and his family. He’s starving the tumors of sugars and combating the cancer with vitamin therapy. He also has undergone a rigorous radiation and chemotherapy regimen.



**Adam Gaspar and I have been friends since the first grade, but we’re closer now than ever before.**

I’ll never forget the day I became friends with Adam. It was show-and-tell day, and my mom had asked me to tell a whopper. As I stood before my fellow first-graders holding one of my dad’s boots, I told them the legendary lumberjack Paul Bunyan had stopped by our house and forgotten his footwear.

I shared a few tales of Bunyan, the classic big man, who American folklore purports being of such gargantuan size and titanic strength that he and his big blue ox Babe plowed the Grand Canyon. I sold my mom’s story the best I could, but before I could take my seat, Adam called my bluff.

“That can’t be Paul Bunyan’s boot. My dad’s shoes are bigger than that,” Adam argued.

I was not pleased with this naysayer, but what

was I to do? I was the smallest kid in the class, and Adam was the tallest. Realizing I couldn’t beat him, I joined him. That was 35 years ago.

### Standing taller than ever

As fate would have it, Adam has become my — and many others’ — real Paul Bunyan. Adam stands 6-ft. 8-in. and has helped create a few worldly wonders of his own — the most towering being the unshakable love he shares with his wife, Ann, and their little giants Nick, Monika and Gabi (my goddaughters), Juli, Emily and Adam Jr.

Adam’s lying flat in bed a lot these days, but he has never stood taller to me, his family or the thousands of others he has touched and helped. We’re all fervently pulling and praying for him.

I’ve learned so much about life, love and laughter the past few months — thanks to Adam. Two of my many take-home lessons are that we need to cherish every day at work and at home, and really pull together during times of adversity.

All of us are here for a limited time. If God calls Adam home sooner than we hope, we need to remember His plan is both beautiful and mysterious. More will be revealed. It took decades for me to step back and see the true beauty of my mom’s plan that show-and-tell day — a plan that made no sense to me at the time, but one I now see brought Adam into my life.

.....  
**Contact Marty at  
216/706-3766 or  
e-mail at  
mwhitford@  
questex.com**



We need to cherish every day,  
and really pull together during times of adversity.