

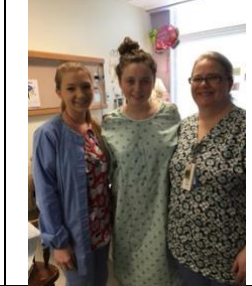


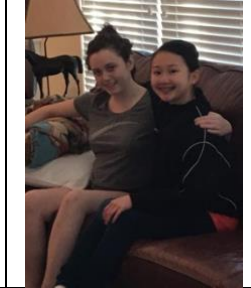


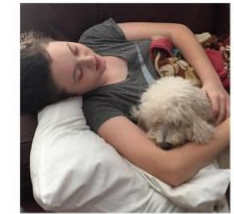


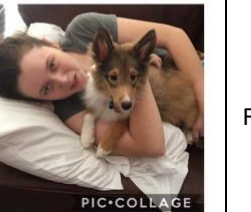


Friends and Family,

We wanted to give you an update on Amber, now that we are almost 11 months after surgery. We first wanted to thank each of you for your calls, texts, messages, cards, gifts, and most of all your prayers as we faced this major surgery. Amber found out she had scoliosis when she was 8 years old and had slept in a back brace every night until last December – she said that was the one bright point of the surgery! What I had never realized until we started dealing with pain management and awakening nerves in the weeks after surgery was that she had also been in almost constant low-level pain. She didn't know how to tell the nurses where she was on the pain scale because she'd just always been in pain.

Now, thanks to the expertise of Dr. Fred Piehl and Midlands Orthopedics, she is pain free and two inches taller with a straight back and a bright future. God blessed us, as Dr. Piehl assisted on Piper's surgery (at 15 months old) and he put Amber's leg back together when she was 12 and her sweet gelding kicked out and hit her by mistake. He has also performed this surgery for the last 30 years – we couldn't have been in better hands! The nurses at the children's hospital were all superb – knowing when to push and when to give meds – encouraging and firm and always there. So many blessings.

				
<p>Heading Back for Surgery</p>	<p>Waiting for Results – this was close to 5:30pm that night</p>	<p>Some of our amazing nurses</p>	<p>Visitors – Nana and Granddaddy</p>	
		<p>Being a Harry Potter Fan and a lover of art, Amber loved that a previous patient had painted Dobby on the ceiling in a hospital gown with a hospital sock. She wanted to also be a “free patient” like Dobby!</p>		
				
<p>Visits from Friends</p>				
				
		<p>First Day Home ← and First Walk to the Barn ^</p>		<p>Height Difference! 2 Inches in 8 hours!</p>

Through the last few months, Amber faced some trials as she pushed to restart her activities as soon as possible; she was heartbroken that her body would not let her compete at IEA Regionals last year, but worked as much as she could that day, earning a Sportsmanship award for the region. She didn't miss a beat with her ZooTeen internship at Riverbanks, making the January meeting. She also restarted work on her second degree black belt, and was allowed to participate without force in February when she also got back on her horse to walk/jog. She was so happy to be reunited with Fancy. She tried loping, but it hurt, so we had to discontinue that.



Dr. Piehl cleared her for activities (except bungee jumping – she was disappointed... ;) in June. She started the new IEA season for both her Western team (Flamekissed) and her Huntseat team (Creekside), with good ribbons in each discipline. She'd sent Fancy off for some tune-up training with Steven Marbry and was so pleased with her progress. When she expressed interest in trying NRHA and some reining, Steven suggested she may want to try a new partner, and we now have a new family member, Spook!



November is now here – Amber participated in her first NRHA show in Jacksonville, FL and did very well on both Spook and Fancy. She's excited about this new adventure. She continues to excel in all honors coursework at Hammond (and made A's on all four exams she took early before surgery – so proud!). She passed her driver's test and has her restricted license which turns to a regular one at age 16 in SC. She will soon test for her second degree black belt, and Dr. Piehl has completely cleared her for all activities, even bungee jumping... but he's not a fan ;) Her x-rays are looking great, there's no pain, no brace, and a bright future ahead.



Your thoughts and prayers meant (and still mean) so much to us. Thank you so much for everything. Hope you have enjoyed this update and some photos of Amber's progress throughout the past year.

Love,

Lee, Paige, Piper, Amber, Tango, Snowball, Oreo, Fynn, Duke, Fancy, and Spook