

# Man of Strength

by Rich Clingman (09/01/05)

*Jeff McAllister (28), who some would call "a victim" of Duchenne muscular dystrophy, was a man of action: founder of the DMD Pioneers and the NIV Users Group; an advocate for the disabled. Though he lacked the strength to lift a finger, he reached to touch the lives of thousands.*

As a boy he was given so very little hope.

"This boy will live, never to be a man."

Mother, father, unsure whether he could cope,

Challenged the boy to faith, to love, to life, to plan.

"But, poor boy, poor child, poor family, poor life.

Never to be a father. Never to have a wife."

Shortsighted, self-centered, unlearn-ed, closed mind,

Open thy eye! See what faith can find!

An advocate for the stranger.

A graduate from college.

A strength, not to stand,

Still stands to rescue, stands to teach.

A mind far beyond

The goal of simple knowledge.

A heart, a hope, a love moved to action,

Reaching far beyond arm's reach.

A pioneer for life.

A lover of music.

A "Son of Joy" to the end.

A faith in his God.

A man of action, so amazing.

In lives touched, you live on,

Man of Strength,

Dear friend!

# Authentic Manhood

by Rich Clingman (09/01/05)

Mother, father, do you face challenges with the prospect of your son "never living to his potential"? Then teach your boy to replicate the example lived out by my friend Jeff in his twenty-eight years. Teach your boy that there is much more to manhood than gray hair and more strength than that borne by muscles.

In *The Quest for Authentic Manhood*, Robert Lewis defines Authentic Manhood with four attributes. Authentic Manhood:

- \* Rejects passivity
- \* Accepts responsibility
- \* Leads courageously
- \* Expects the greater reward, God's reward.

I am proud to have known a living example of Authentic Manhood, and am saddened by his passing.

Jeff McAllister rejected passivity. Unwilling to sit on the sidelines, Jeff took up the cause of increasing the quality of life and prolonging the lives of boys and men with Duchenne muscular dystrophy and other disabilities.

Jeff McAllister literally took responsibility for every breath he breathed. Having lost muscular strength to even take a breath, Jeff chose to live-on using NIV—non-invasive ventilation—, requiring his personal initiative for each breath. And Jeff saw it as his challenge to promote NIV and prolonged-life for men and boys with Duchenne, putting into action his love for others.

Jeff McAllister led courageously even when some attacked him as preachy or condemned his activism. This Pioneer pressed on even when it seemed he blazed trails with so few following. This man who couldn't raise a finger reached around the world, touching thousands of lives and leaving a legacy of relationships and insights that live on.

Jeff McAllister never sought a payout for his investment in the lives of others except the payout of life. Jeff sowed seeds anticipating a harvest, knowing it might not be in this life that those rewards would be revealed.

Do you seek manhood for a boy who may pass too young? Teach him the principles lived by Jeff McAllister, the principles of Authentic Manhood: Reject passivity; accept responsibility; lead courageously; expect the greater reward, God's reward.