

APR. 6 1980

Your Cards and Letters Will Help a Brave, Crippled Boy

He's bravely fighting a terrifying illness that will take his life . . . but little Johnny Harris battles the pain with a smile on his face.

The tiny hospital patient relies on his faithful toy monkey and the few cards he gets to bolster his spirits.

And you could help him to keep that smile on his face by writing him a card or letter.

"When Johnny gets mail, he smiles from ear to ear," said his dad, Earl Harris, of Neches, Tex. "It just tickles him so."

Victim of an undiagnosed disease which slowly and progressively affects the nervous system, Johnny — who turned 9 on February 25 — can no longer walk or sit up by himself.

He has very little use of his arms, and, having lost his digestive functions, he can't even eat.

Protruding from a hole in Johnny's stomach is a tube which feeds him and provides the digestion his body cannot achieve.

The 51-pound boy is constantly in and out of hospitals

and has been critically ill for the past three years.

Twice in those three years, his family has been hastily summoned to his bedside with news that he would not make it through the night — and both times Johnny beat the odds.

"He has an incredible will to live," said Harris, a gas station attendant with four other children. "I've never written Johnny off. He's a fighter."

"I think love's behind his spirit. He loves us and he knows we love him. As far as he's concerned, life is worth living!"

Johnny's mother, Dorothy, added, "He doesn't feel one bit sorry for himself."

"He's just accepting what has happened to him. He smiles at everybody."

There is nothing that gives

Johnny a bigger thrill than cards and letters, she said.

"Not long ago he received two cards from a friend of ours. When he got ready for bed, he cried and raised heck because he wanted to sleep with the cards.

"He likes to have them with him or pinned up by his bed so he can look at them all the time."

Johnny's pediatrician, Dr. M.L. Gray in Jacksonville, Tex., said that cards and letters would be a real boon to the boy.

"Since Johnny can't enjoy the things other boys his age enjoy, getting cards and letters from people all over the country would do him a lot of good," he said. "It would be a wonderful way to boost his spirits."

Please send Johnny a card or letter. Write in care of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Harris, P.O. Box 127, Neches, Tex. 75779.

— GWEN YOUNT GARDEN



I wonder why those who do the least thinking so often are the ones who tell you what they think.

— The Country Parson



IN CONSTANT PAIN, Johnny Harris holds the toy monkey that is his faithful companion.



GIFTS AND MAIL surround Johnny. "This outpouring of love has lessened his pain," says his mother.

19,000 Generous Readers ^{June 24 '50} Put Sunshine Into Last Days Of Dying 9-Year-Old Boy

"The love that has poured in to Johnny from all over the world is the best thing that's ever happened to him — now he knows there are people who care," said Earl Harris, choking up with emotion.

His 9-year-old son, Johnny, is dying from a mysterious, painful disease which is attacking his nervous system.

Ever since The ENQUIRER appealed to readers in our April 6 issue to brighten Johnny's last days, he's been deluged with nearly 19,000 letters, cards and gifts.

"The cards and letters have brought tears of joy to our eyes," said Johnny's mother, Dorothy, at their home in Neches, Tex. "We never realized so many people could care so much."

Johnny is still losing weight — he's down to 40 pounds — and the disease continues to ravage his body, but when the mail arrives, he grins from ear to ear, she said. "He's so happy he can hardly stand it."

"His daddy and I read every single letter to him and his eyes just sparkle and light up even though he's very weak and can hardly move. This outpouring of love has lessened his pain. He doesn't notice it so much. He's so excited over all the mail that he doesn't have time to think about hurting."

Said Johnny's physician,

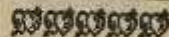
By GWEN YOUNT CARDEN

Dr. M.L. Gray: "The letters really are boosting his morale and they help keep his mind off his illness. I've seen a definite improvement in his spirits."

Johnny has received letters from Japan, England and South America. The cast of "Barney Miller" sent him an autographed photo and he received a card from Todd Bridges, who plays Willis on "Diff'rent Strokes."

One of the most touching gifts came from a Canadian who painted a picture of Johnny from a photo that appeared with the story. "We have it hanging in our living room and we will always cherish it," said Harris.

"Please tell ENQUIRER readers how grateful we are. They'll never know how much this has meant to us. It has cheered Johnny and lifted his spirits like nothing else has ever done."



It is better for a woman to marry a man who loves her than a man she loves.

— Arabian Proverb Jun