

Real inspiration from Steve Chalke

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Catholic thrilled to lead C of E school

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They said she would never stand, never leave hospital and never speak again. Now she's doing all three.

IT'S A MIRACLE!

THIS was the moment Danny and Jackie Corp were told they'd never see.

Six months ago their daughter Christina ended up in a coma after a horrific car crash. She nearly died on three separate occasions. Her parents were told she would have severe brain damage, that she would never walk or talk, and that she would never leave hospital.

So it was an emotional moment when the 17-year-old came home for the first time. Her family, who are regulars at St Barnabas Church in Swansmore, are convinced this is a miracle.

"According to the textbooks, we should have been planning her funeral," said Jackie. "But God doesn't work according to textbooks. He made promises to us about her recovery and has kept them. It's not possible in medical terms, so we can only say that it's a miracle."

Last April, Christina and two of her friends set off for Portsdown Hill along the A32. The collision between their car and a coach killed Vicky Waters, 18, while Kimberly Hood, who was 17 then, escaped with a broken rib.

Christina's life was saved for



A hug for Christina from best friend Kimberly Hood

the first time at the scene. A naval petty officer with training in severe trauma kept her breathing until an ambulance arrived.

"Don't let anyone tell you that angels don't exist," said Jackie. "He got a commendation for what he did, and I'd like Christina to meet him and thank him."

She had a life-saving operation on her pelvis as she was literally bleeding to death. But her condition worsened the next day, and the family was told she had only an hour left to live.

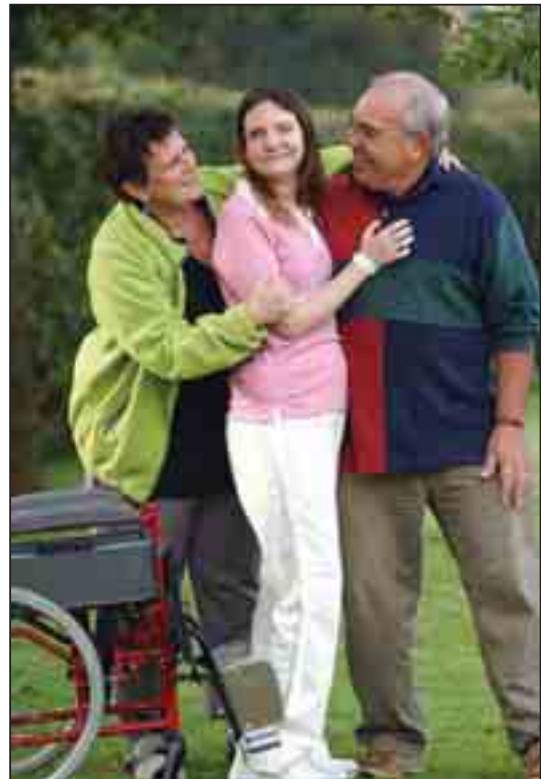
Family and friends gathered around her bed for the equivalent of the last rites – hospital chaplain Peter Jones said some prayers, read some Scripture and gave a blessing. But she pulled through.

"It's often when you have nothing left to rely on except for God, when everything else is stripped away, that you really experience God's power," said Danny. "For me it was almost an experience of heaven to see God work in that way."

The family started a prayer chain that went around the world. Family and friends visited her constantly, playing music, talking to her and praying.

A local Methodist minister with a gift of healing anointed her lips and eyes with oil and prayed for her to speak and see. The impact had affected one side of her face, with nerve endings, one eye and her jaw damaged. Christina remained in a coma for eight to 10 weeks, but her prospects weren't good.

"At that stage she wasn't responding to pins in her fingers and toes, and we were told she had such brain damage that the only thing she'd be able to do is breathe for herself," said Jackie. "We were told she'd be unlikely ever to leave



Christina is welcomed home by mum and dad Jackie and Danny

hospital. One consultant even said there was a point when they might be asking to withdraw treatment.

"But the prayer really worked. She didn't get a serious infection, she didn't get bedsores, and she started to kick her legs. We'd been told she'd never come out of the coma, so that was exciting."

Christina was transferred to an adolescent head injuries unit in Bath. Tests showed her neurological responses were good, and there was delight when they discovered she could still read.

There was more joy when one day she simply said: "Hello" to her mum. The next day she said: "I love you". She's now getting physically stronger, can chat normally, and can stand, though she needs a wheelchair most of the time.

"Our own faith has definitely got stronger as a result of this," said Jackie. "When she was still in

the coma, God said we should be prepared to let her die if that's what Christina wanted. So we told her that. We gave her permission to go and be with the Lord.

"The next day, God reminded me of the story where Abraham prepares to sacrifice his son Isaac. When God sees he is prepared to do that, he gives Isaac back to Abraham. That's what it feels like to us – God has given us Christina's life back."

"She tells everyone she's a Christian, though her own faith has taken a bit of a knock. But she's very cheerful – a wonderful example to all her friends."

Next month will also be a special one for Christina. On her 18th birthday, she is due to be a godmother for the baby sister of Kimberly – her best friend who survived the crash. And she hopes she will live at home permanently from next summer.