

Menu

WFTS
TAMPA BAY

Watch

Quick links...

ALERT

**What's happening in Tampa Bay this weekend? |
December 20-22**

NEWS



Mosquito borne virus nearly killed woman's son

Posted: 10:09 PM, Feb 05, 2016 Updated: 2016-02-05 22:09:35-05

By: [Michael Paluska](#)

It has been three years since Katherine Kinsey prayed, pleaded, and urged her son to fight the virus that was trying to kill him.

It was during a field trip to a nature preserve that her 14-year-old son James Hatfield, then 11, contracted Eastern Equine Encephalitis. The virus causes inflammation of the brain. It begins with the sudden onset of headache, high fever, chills and vomiting. The illness may then progress into disorientation, seizures, or coma, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

MORE | [Health emergency issued in Florida over Zika concerns](#)

Kinsey said she never thought a mosquito could cause her family so much harm.

“They (doctors) told us that we should go get a lottery ticket because people don't usually get this virus, and the ones that do they don't survive.”

James said his headache was so bad at the onset it felt like someone “smashed him with a hammer.”

It took three months for James to make a full recovery. During that time, Kinsey said her son was in the Intensive Care Unit for three days and slipped into a coma for six excruciatingly long hours.

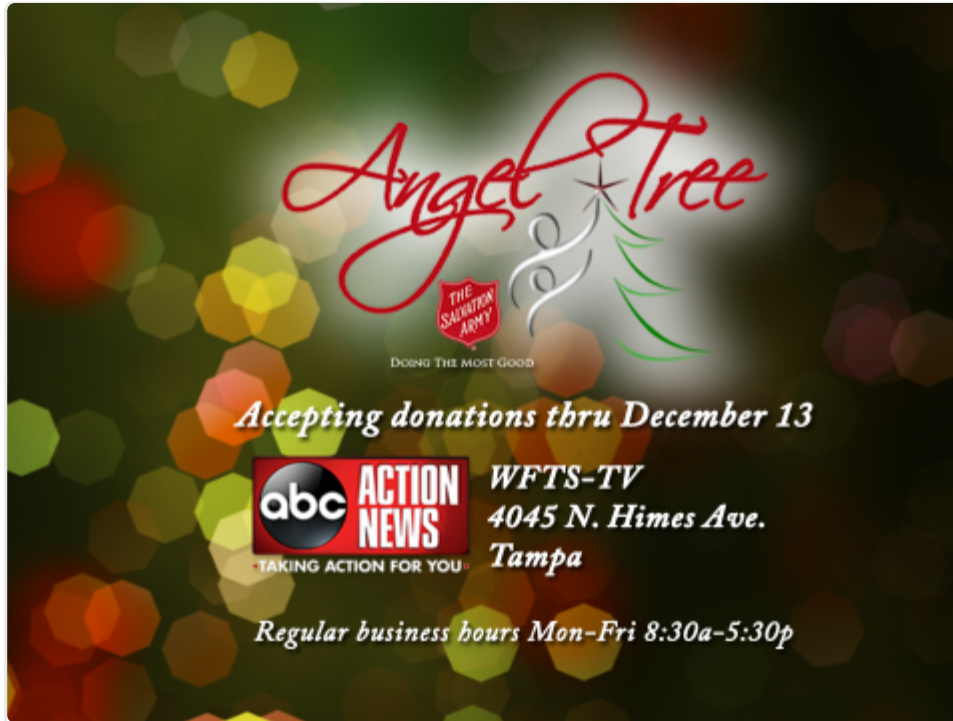
“Then he woke up,” Kinsey said. “They were pretty sure it was going to go the one way because we just had no answers as to what was wrong and he just kept declining, so they were pretty sure it wasn't going to end up well. He had angels watching out for him.”

MORE | *Zika Virus sexually transmitted to person in Texas*

With 14 confirmed travel related cases of Zika in Florida, Kinsey hopes everyone heeds her warning and wears mosquito repellent. Although, the Zika virus only gives adults mild symptoms that include fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eye). The risk to pregnant mothers is real. It has been associated with birth defects in newborns.

“It is so easy to pick up a bottle of repellent,” Kinsey said. “It could save someone from what we had to go through.”

Scripps Only Content 2016



Help a Child In Need This Season





Scripps Local Media
© 2019 Scripps Media,
Inc

News

Video

Traffic

Taking Action for You

Sports

Entertainment

Marketplace

Don't Waste Your Money

Support

Site Map

Privacy Policy

Journalism Ethics Guidelines

Terms of Use

EEO

Careers

FCC Public Files

Public File Contact