

Metro/State news

Star Tribune



Friday
January 15/1993
Read then recycle

1B
w

First, she survived; now jury helps out Two drivers found liable

By Margaret Zack
Staff Writer

The life of Anna Duffy and her family changed dramatically and permanently on an October morning more than two years ago as she and her 3-year-old daughter were walking to her mother-in-law's home in northeast Minneapolis.

Duffy, 34, at the time, set Sara down on the sidewalk after carrying her across Lowry Av. NE. at N. 2nd St., heard a noise and looked up to see a car coming at her.

With what she calls motherly instinct, she pushed Sara out of the way, and the child suffered only a cut lip. Duffy was hit and thrown into the street.

But worse was to come.

As she lay in the street, she saw the garbage truck approaching; the front wheels of the turning truck missed her, but then she felt the back wheels crush her pelvis.

Her first 17 days in North Memorial Medical Center were tough and go. Early during her treatment, her family was told she would die.

But in a remarkable story of courage and therapy, Duffy survived.

And on Wednesday, a Hennepin County District Court jury awarded her \$1.7 million.

The jury found Dawayne Hoecherl, the driver of the car, 83 percent negligent, and Arnold Darwin, driver of the Kutter's Rubbish Removal

Duffy continued on page 7B



Staff Photo by Rita Reed

Anna Duffy shared mother-daughter time with Sara, now 5. Duffy, seriously injured in an accident more than two years ago, was awarded \$1.7 million by a jury in Minneapolis this week.

Duffy/ Despite injuries, she says she holds no grudges

Continued from page 1B

truck, 17 percent negligent. Both drivers are from Minneapolis.

The jury gave Duffy \$423,000 for past medical bills, \$500,000 for past pain and suffering, \$450,000 for future pain and suffering and \$250,000 for future medical costs. Her husband was awarded \$100,000 for loss of consortium.

James Carey, Duffy's attorney, said he was able to prove that Hoecherl knew his car's brakes were bad and hadn't addressed the problem and that Darwin didn't look when he turned the corner. Both drivers had said they were not negligent.

In an interview Thursday, Duffy, who lived not far from the accident site and now lives in a Twin Cities suburb, said: "I don't hold any grudges. God wouldn't want me to be that way. Even though I suffer daily, my faith brings me away from hatred."

Duffy's injuries were severe. According to Carey, a urologist said it was like someone had taken an ax to her. Her bladder, uterus and rectum were severely damaged, and she has had a colostomy and surgery to provide urine flow.

The truck tire's tore skin off her legs and hips, leaving scars and requiring skin grafts. A hip replacement may be needed.

During her first two days in the hospital, Duffy received 200 units of blood. "I've had doctors say they've never heard anyone survive [who needed] that amount," she said.

Duffy said she can walk some but requires a wheelchair to go any distance. Because of the skin grafts, she has to avoid both the sun and cold weather. That means she can't participate in sports such as walking and volleyball, as she previously had with her family. She can't always watch her sons, aged 14 and 10 participate in outdoor sports.

Despite her ordeal, she remains upbeat.

"I tend not to dwell on what I lost," she said. "I concentrate on my husband, children and family."

She said family and friends pitch in with the housework.

"I'm lucky. I've had a lot of prayers, a lot of people praying for me," she said.

She said employees at North Memorial have told her that they use her as a model for other patients.

After the accident, Duffy had remained conscious until she got to the hospital. She even thought to give someone her husband's telephone number at work.

"It was awfully scary," she said yesterday. "I cried out to God and called for help."

She feels particularly good that she was able to save her daughter. She said she thinks the car would have hit Sara full force.

"I'm glad I had the ability to get her out of the way," she said. "The scariest thing is that she could have been hurt."