Pediatric burn patient bounces back

Kelsay Parrot's story begins in her kitchen on May 13, 2003. The precocious four-year-old climbed on a chair to "help" her mom blow out a candle. Moments later, the left side of her sundress was in flames.

With third degree burns over one third of her body, Kelsay spent five weeks at Clarkson Hospital in Omaha and endured multiple grafting surgeries before going home to Cherokee, Iowa.

When Kelsay returned to Clarkson in August, her plastic surgeon recommended that she come to Madonna for intensive rehabilitation. "They were afraid she'd lose her left arm if we didn't come," Michelle Parrot, Kelsay's mom, said.

When she arrived, Kelsay had limited movement in her left arm, neck and shoulder and lingering respiratory problems from her ordeal. Madonna's pediatric and burn teams, together with Kelsay's family, focused on improving her ability to move and breathe, and to care for her burned skin.

Madonna also offered Kelsay unique experiences to prepare her to return home. In the hospital's Therapeutic Learning Center, Kelsay spent time in a classroom setting, working on the physical and emotional skills she needed to prepare for school. She visited the Child Development Center, a daycare for hospital employees on Madonna's campus, where she played dress-up, colored pictures and made new friends.

Kelsay and her family also worked with the burn team to begin a research project "that will hopefully help us better treat other burn survivors," said her occupational therapist. She teamed up with physical and respiratory therapists to use new treatment techniques to increase Kelsay's lung capacity.

Kelsay began Kindergarten, is playing soccer and is able to give her dad, mom and sister a big hug every evening.