



Dwight Karkan and his daughter, Selah, display a copy of 'Bixby Timmons and the Dragonthorp Riddle,' which will be included in a basket of items that will be up for bids at the Waynesboro Area Gala Cancer Auction on April 9.

BY NANCY MACE

Two stories in one: Author donates book sale proceeds  
to honor daughter's journey with cancer  
By Nancy Mace

God's way is perfect.

It's a matter of faith, said 5-year-old Selah Karkan of Waynesboro, who is now in the "watch phase" after completing treatment for B-ALL (B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia).

Selah and family, father Dwight, mother Amber, and siblings Delaney and Theo, just returned from Penn State's THON 2022, which raised over \$13.7 million for Four Diamonds at Penn State's Children's Hospital. It's personal for the Karkans, who donate all proceeds from the sale of Dwight's 2021 book, "Bixby Timmons and the Dragonthorp Riddle," to the fund. Selah has been a patient at Penn State Children's Hospital in Hershey since she was diagnosed in May 2019.

"The book was started in 2014 before Selah was here," according to Dwight. "God was working out the timing - there were a lot of delays - so that 'Bixby' could be published at the end of her treatment. We found out how we could give back."

Dwight said that after being through the harshest of chemotherapy, Selah will be examined once a month for next year and a half "to make sure all systems come back online. It's a 5-year process to reach the status where they believe she is cured, not just in remission. They said relapse is extremely rare. She will get an annual checkup (then) for the rest of her life."

The family also has a local cause, The Waynesboro Area Gala Cancer Auction, and has donated a basket filled with "Bixby" items including one of the original 12 copies of the book, puzzle books, a gift certificate to Chick-fil-A and the promise of a first edition of book two, "Secrets of Shadow Deep," set for release in a few months, in the proposed four-book series. WAGCA will be held Saturday, April 9, in Green Grove Gardens, 1032 Buchanan Trail East, Greencastle. Doors open at 3 p.m., the silent auction begins at 4 p.m., and oral bidding starts at 5:30 p.m.; admission is free.

### The journey

"Your daughter has cancer. It's the last thing you want to hear, really was one of those moments. I don't want to do this," offered Dwight, youth pastor at Otterbein Church of Waynesboro. "Then you do what is

necessary to make sure your daughter has the best chance. You look at life differently ... what is really important in life. Faith and family surrounded us. We have a fantastic church. They cooked meals and cleaned. We're so grateful to them. They helped us with encouragement and mourned with us in setbacks."

Selah's "God's way is perfect" message was delivered via Zoom during her father's address at the Waynesboro Area Senior High School baccalaureate service last year, Dwight said. "Don't you worry, everything is going to be OK," Selah told them.

## The book

An avid fan of puzzles, riddles, and the Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys series, Dwight has been solving riddles that come with a baseball card for years. "You collect the card and solve the puzzle."

"Amber and I knew we wanted to give to a charity and she said, 'Why don't you write a riddle and the first person who solves it will donate to the charity of their choice?'

"We sent the riddle, anonymously, to 20 people we knew were heavily involved in charities. Fourteen replied and a donation was made to PMI Pregnancy Resource Center. It was so much fun and my wife said, 'You should write a book.' Three weeks later I had 66,000 words of book one completed." Dwight chose the name, Bixby Timmons, for the lead character. "I wanted 'X marks the spot' as part of the name and found a company called Bixby Bottling Co.

"Bixby and her family are asked to be caretakers of a manor belonging to tech billionaire, Cody Dragonthorp, who has gone missing," according to Dwight. "She finds puzzles and realizes that Cody has left a trail of breadcrumbs to find him as four other students find their way in. He (Cody) leads them on a puzzle race as to why he's gone and where he's gone."

Dwight acknowledged the help he received from best-selling author Nora Roberts. "She advised me not to self-publish. She said it will take a couple of years but get an agent and a publisher."

He added that the family also is able to give back through his visits to schools. "Amber is a teacher. What do you give back to people who gave you your daughter back? So, I go to different schools and talk to students about life and writing. I get asked the question, 'What inspired you to write the books?' I tell them it was through God, that they are gifted by God to do certain things and they should use those gifts. It's a unique opportunity to

do ministry, but not be overly Christian. There are parts of the book (geared to middle grades but for all ages) that teach about decisions, and you use STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) to solve riddles and puzzles in the book.”

If book two does well there will be conversations with Netflix and production companies, who have expressed interest, Dwight said. “There’s no end in sight for Bixby, and we’re OK with that. I don’t make any money. This is not for us or about us. It never has been. It’s about giving away.”

“Bixby” can be found at Wee Scot Book Shoppe on the square in Waynesboro, which carries only autographed copies, as well as all other major outlets where books are available.