Playing soccer takes some fancy footwork and 13-year-old Jared Vizzini wasn’t sure he’d be up to the challenge after a toe injury nearly sidelined him for the spring 2014 season.

Jared fractured his toe in late December 2013—probably, he thinks, when he dropped a camera battery on it. The pain wasn’t overly significant at first. He had an appointment scheduled with James Pope, MD, Physicians’ Clinic of Iowa (PCI) orthopaedic surgeon, for Jan. 14, 2014. After evaluating Jared, Dr. Pope suspected a deep infection in Jared’s right ankle causing both pain and an elevated temperature.

Dr. Pope contacted James Matsuda, MD, PhD, Mercy Pediatric Hospitalist and Medical Director of Pediatrics, to coordinate an immediate care plan for Jared. An MRI confirmed Dr. Pope’s diagnosis of osteomyelitis, a bone infection that had spread from his toe up to his ankle.

Jared was admitted to Mercy’s Children’s Services. The next day, Dr. Pope performed surgery to clean out the infection in Jared’s ankle. Following surgery, Jared stayed at Mercy for six days to receive medical care, including IV antibiotics, which were administered through a peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC) by Mercy’s specially trained PICC line team.

Dr. Matsuda provided daily reports of Jared’s progress to his parents, Sharon and Bob, who are both deaf, via an interpreter provided by Mercy. Language assistance and interpreter services are provided at no cost to Mercy patients.

Jared Vizzini, 13, is happy to be back on the field after recovering from a bone infection.
Sharon says, “I commend the hospital staff for efficiently contacting the agency and having interpreters provided as needed. They were very considerate of this need of ours. At other times, the nurses were very helpful in writing notes when an interpreter was not present.”

“...to maintain a very real ball game for us! We have four other children and have never encountered a health issue of this magnitude,” says Sharon. “Dr. Matsuda was very knowledgeable about all the details of Jared’s situation. He was very thorough and clear in explaining what was happening and what needed to be done. I think he connected well with Jared and made him feel comfortable with being in the hospital.”

“I agree with Sharon about Dr. Matsuda’s at-ease relationship with Jared,” says Bob. “He also related well with us. Being deaf and needing an interpreter, it does not come across well with many doctors... Dr. Matsuda went beyond that and treated us like any other parent. His team of nurses was awesome with Jared and us.”

Bob says he appreciated many aspects of Jared’s experience at Mercy, including the caring staff, room privacy, ability to remain close by Jared’s side and the hospital’s flexibility, such as allowing Jared to choose what and when he wanted to eat with Mercy’s 24/7 inpatient room service. (Mercy’s Food & Nutritional Services department has averaged 94% in Press-Ganey patient satisfaction percentile rankings for the past five years, in part because of patients’ appreciation of 24/7 inpatient room service.)

“The nurses told me to feel at home. I was able to set up a work area in the room and, when Jared slept, I felt free to set up a table in the hallway and focus on my work,” Bob says. “It was great — we could be near Jared the whole time as he encountered different issues, tests and had a long healing process.”

Deanna Glass, Consistent Care Social Worker, helped coordinate Jared’s follow-up care after discharge, including at-home IV antibiotic therapy administered through his PICC line and outpatient physical therapy. She also helped him establish his long-term medical home with Rick Mersch, MD, FAAP, at Mercy Pediatric Clinic for continued specialized pediatric care.

The new Mercy Pediatric Clinic features locally experienced and respected pediatric providers Scott K. Nau, MD, FAAP, and Wieslaw (Wes) Machnowski, MD, FAAP, in addition to Dr. Mersch. The practice provides primary care for children, from newborns through college. Today, Jared has fully recovered from his ordeal and was able to play 7th/8th grade soccer at Prairie Point Middle School. He achieved at least one big goal for the year — getting back on that field!”

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Sharon Vizzini
Mother of Jared
Pediatric Patient

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