

# AMAZING KID

## Austin Vella



Making a difference one child at a time!

## 110° Amazing Kid (May) Austin Vella — An Amazing Kid

By Laura Page

Michael Vella nominated his son, Austin, as an Amazing Kid. The judges have selected him as the Amazing Kid for this May issue because 13-year-old Austin is fully engaged in life. He is a Senior Patrol Leader of his Brentwood Boy Scout Troop 90, as well as a key member of his school's cross-country team.

Austin practices an active lifestyle, engaging in such edge-of-the-envelope activities as climbing to the top of Half Dome, plus swimming, biking, and running as a competitor in the Santa Cruz SuperKid Triathlon.

The truly amazing part of Austin's story is that he has accomplished all this in spite of having undergone three open-heart surgeries, as well as seven heart catheterizations in order to correct his heart that was only partially developed.

The fact that Austin is healthy and able to move around normally may be due to those medical interventions, but he's a competitive athlete only because of the fact that he hasn't learned the meaning of the word "can't."

Besides being an athlete, Austin has rare faculties of perception and understanding. Michael told us that his son amazes him every day by his continual display of wisdom far beyond his years; he feels that Austin's mature insights into life might be related to the severe cardiac condition of his youth.

During his enforced periods of inactivity, before the series of medical treatments were complete, Austin might have brooded about his condition. He could have been excused if he had become morose and sullen about the limitations and restrictions that his physical problems were placing upon him at the time. Nobody could have blamed him if Austin had complained about the pain and discomfort of those repeated trips to the hospital.

But Michael said that his son made the best out of the bad hand that life had dealt him. The weight of Austin's concern about his future — whether he would ever be able to live a normal life or even if he would survive to reach adulthood — caused him to reflect upon the meaning of life. Rather than becoming embittered by his pain and discomfort, Michael learned lessons about caring and compassion for others who are suffering beneath some weight of their own.

So now Austin is performing whatever acts of ministry and service for others that he can, including serving as an altar boy, assisting younger Boy Scouts to improve in following Scouting's traditions and skills, plus working for various volunteer events. Michael said that Austin constantly puts others first and attends to the needs of them before taking care of himself.

Last year Austin's activities ranged from organizing a bike trip for Boy Scouts along the Creekside Trail to putting together Thanksgiving boxes of food at church for needy people.

Austin has learned the results of generosity and humility, the rewards that come from showing compassion to others, the wisdom that comes from selflessness, and the potential that can be unlocked by his coming to believe in himself and in the things he can accomplish, both physically and in the realm of the mind and spirit.

We salute Austin for his accomplishments, his attitude of service, and for the internal strength that he has demonstrated in overcoming obstacles and facing up to challenges. Austin Vella is surely an Amazing Kid!

**Do you know an "Amazing Kid" between the ages of five and 18 years old that is worthy of this award?**

The Amazing Kid Nomination Deadline is May 31, 2009.

(Entries received after the deadline will be considered for the subsequent issue of 110° Magazine.)

To Nominate an "Amazing Kid" go to [www.110mag.com](http://www.110mag.com) and click on The Amazing Kid Nomination link.

Contact [editors@110mag.com](mailto:editors@110mag.com) with any comments on the article.

