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## Toddler's dad: "appreciate what you have"

Posted July 22, 2009 04:06 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, *Globe correspondent*

On his way home from work last Thursday, Anthony LaFauci answered a call from a neighbor who told him his 22-month-old daughter's leg had been run over.

He turned onto his street in Waltham about five minutes later, and saw what then seemed like a hundred people standing around his driveway.

"A million thoughts start racing through your head. You don't know what to expect. You don't know what you're going to see," LaFauci said in an interview today.

His wife Rachel was hysterically attending to their daughter Sophia who, Anthony then learned, had been pinned under the front tire of the family's Ford Expedition after it rolled over the toddler's left thigh and onto her belly.

The accident happened when Rachel had pulled the car forward a few feet to make room so she could open the back hatch and pack the vehicle for a family vacation.

However, Sophia, who had been watching a movie in the living room with her four-year-old twin sisters, had followed her mother into the garage, and, unaware to Rachel, was in front of the SUV when her mom pulled forward.

"She didn't even hit the accelerator," said Anthony. "It was completely a freak accident. It could've happened to anyone"

Rachel stepped out of vehicle, saw her daughter pinned underneath, put the car in reverse and called 911.

Emergency responders arrived within minutes to find Sophia conscious, crying and moving her legs, Anthony said. Though she was showing some positive signs, Anthony recalled his worry as Sophia was medflighted to Boston Medical Center.

"You think of everything from A to Z. You immediately race to the worst case scenario," he said.

Sophia arrived at the hospital in "critical" condition, which was downgraded to "serious" as of Friday, according to Gina Digravio of the hospital's media relations. And, by Monday, the toddler had made a full recovery and returned home with only a red mark on her neck.

"There's no medical explanation. There's no logical explanation as to how she recovered like this," Anthony said.

"It's a huge relief – seeing her talking and eating and walking," he continued. "She'll have no memory of this. She's moving around and running around like a 22-month-old should."

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Anthony said his wife did not want to comment.

“She’s emotional to think of the other outcomes that could’ve happened,” said Anthony. “She’s somewhat hesitant to drive, but that’s to be expected.”

Since the incident, he said Rachel has not left Sophia’s side.

“She’s a very good mother,” he added.

According to Kids and Cars, a national safety advocacy group based in Kansas, over 2400 children visit the emergency room each year from being struck by or rolled over by a vehicle moving in reverse; at least two are fatally injured on a weekly basis.

In March, a 22-month old girl from Peabody suffered serious head injuries when her father accidentally backed his car over her.

Safety experts say the cause is often a result of the “bye bye syndrome.” Children wanting to say “goodbye” to a family member who is leaving – or they think is leaving – can accidentally walk into the path of a moving vehicle.

Anthony also expressed thanks to support from his family, friends, neighbors and to the medical staff who attended to Sophia.

“I can’t begin to say enough about the staff at Boston Medical. Unbelievable. Great. Name a positive adjective and that was them,” said Anthony. “A heart-felt thank you to all of the emergency personnel. They were here. They took care of my baby.”

Anthony said he has taken from the ordeal to “appreciate what you have.”

“We were given a second chance and we’re going to take it,” he said.

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## 20 COMMENTS SO FAR...

1. Maybe I'm just dumb but I don't understand how one can get run over by a car and survive.

Don't get me wrong, it's always good news when the person survives but this is tough to comprehend.

Posted by [no](#) July 22, 09 11:32 AM

2. Thank God ! I am happy for this mom and tot. I prayed for you, I hope you knew that. Sad that the mommies of today are so busy. I know the feeling; working and raising babies is a lot for any one person. God Bless You, Mom.

Posted by [mommy](#) July 22, 09 11:44 AM

3. This is great news. I am happy for the child, and the mother. I am sure she is beside herself at what happened and had this ended tragically I would fear what the mother would have to go through the rest of her life.

Posted by [dan](#) July 22, 09 12:45 PM

4. I prayed too...I've been looking every day to see if there was an update on this story. I'm so incredibly happy and grateful this little girl was spared - and that her mommy didn't lose her. I'm a mother of a 2 1/2 year old little boy and I can't imagine the anguish this poor woman must have been feeling knowing she accidentally and critically injured her own child with her car. Even now, with her little one coming home, she'll be dealing with this trauma for the rest of her life. I hope she doesn't try to go through it alone and instead finds someone who can counsel her. I wish her and her little girl the very best! They're truly blessed...

Posted by [MaryAnn](#) July 22, 09 01:04 PM

5. This is good news indeed!

Posted by Mom of One July 22, 09 02:32 PM

6. I too am happy for this child. This could happen to anyone and it's frightening to think about.

But why can't the Globe/"correspondants" pay attention to details? "The 20-month old Waltham toddler who was run over by his mother's SUV has been released from the hospital." It was a girl! Which it says in the next sentence.

Posted by Melissa July 22, 09 03:04 PM

7. As the dad of a 23 month old and a 5 month old, this happy ending just makes me smile. And want to hug my kids extra hard tonight. And be extra vigilant about them around cars.

People survive these because tire pressure (at 30psi) is the factor. The weight of the car is still spread across the other 3 wheels.

but GREAT NEWS anyway!

Posted by Bob Dad of Two July 22, 09 04:41 PM

8. Another reason why I think SUV's are terrible. You have a much better chance of seeing the top of the toddler's head when driving a car or wagon.

Posted by DL July 22, 09 04:52 PM

9. children's bodies are very flexible and their bones have not hardened yet, so they are more likely to survive getting run over with minimal damage

Posted by not a parent July 22, 09 04:53 PM

10. I'd say simply that she survived this because it's a Miracle. God bless that whole family. It helps remind me of my faith that no matter how much awful stuff we are constantly bombarded with on the news everyday, good things do still happen and miracles do exist.

Posted by Nicole July 22, 09 04:59 PM

11. I hope the mom realizes it was a freak accident and forgives herself. I can only imagine this will affect the mom more than the child, but isn't that always the way? Thank God the little girl is okay.

Posted by mom July 22, 09 05:02 PM

12. When my son was about that age, he was backed over by a pickup truck. The tailgate knocked him down face first, and the tire traveled up his backbone, stopping on his neck. The only lasting effect was a bruise on his elbow from the driver pulling forward when my mom, me and my older son screamed. It took a number of months for the bruise to heal. He's 25 now, and just walked in the room, saw what I was reading and said "I'm not surprised she's fine..." I am so glad this worked out for this family as well as it did for mine.

Posted by Robin July 22, 09 05:16 PM

13. I agree with #8...more likely to see a kid in a smaller vehicle. An Expedition is around 5500 pounds..maybe more. People think these huge things are safe, but they're not, especially at highway speeds. A sudden jerk of the wheel can roll them over because they're top heavy.

I'd never own one.

BTW, glad the toddler survived. A miracle.

Posted by Corboomr July 22, 09 05:24 PM

14. The second generation of this story was MUCH better. Well done. The sappy "busy mommy" comments make me shudder, though.

Posted by Todd Beaulieu July 22, 09 05:44 PM

15. Parents think SUV's make their families safer. They certainly don't. This is a prime example. I would easily see a four year old child in front of me from the seat of my Civic. All SUV's do is make it more dangerous for everyone else around them while giving a false sense of security to their owners while ruining the environment. These parents should be ashamed of themselves.

Posted by MakeLoveNotWar July 22, 09 05:48 PM

16. Great news! Hope all recover with no lasting effects.

Posted by Rich M July 22, 09 05:49 PM

17. This happened to me when I was five. I tripped getting out of my father's

17. This happened to me when I was five. I tripped getting out of my father's 1949 Chevy. It rolled over both my legs, and I escaped with a black eye. I am 57 now, and fine.

Posted by 57 and Fine July 22, 09 06:15 PM

18. "It could've happened to anyone"

I disagree, it could not happen to a parent who exercises an abundance of caution. The television is not a babysitter! She is lucky the story turned out so well, not many are as fortunate.

Posted by Debbie July 22, 09 06:34 PM

19. Thank God the child is doing well and will have a full recoveryThat is al that counts..

Posted by PAUL T. DEVINE July 22, 09 06:48 PM

20. I fail to see how this was a freak accident. It was preventable had the mother checked all around the vehicle and the garage before driving forward.

Posted by karetaakers July 22, 09 07:01 PM

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