

## Visiting Kenny

She walked in behind two skinny teenage volunteers. A TV blared the Saturday afternoon football game for the handsome blond behind the desk who pointed her to Kenny's room down a too-wide hallway, last door on the left. Wheelchairs and stretchers filled places where bikes should've been.

Kenny was balanced in front of the window, staring out. He started asking fast questions as soon as he saw her. Then his buddy Roger came in -- the same thin legs in the same steel braces, the same half-feeling-half-not.

For a long time, the two of them squirted water through the window screen with a plant mister. Their chatter finally wore itself out and left them alone with the football game. She walked over to their window, and the three of them stared out together for a while. Their helmets came almost to her shoulders.

Then Roger showed her his African violet and his art project, and he smiled when she liked them. Kenny pushed her a little from the other side, and they laughed. They tickled her and pulled her hair and squirted her instead of the screen. They said she was soft and her hair was fun to play with and why didn't she lie down. In a few years, they would save all that for lights out, but not yet. Not today. Today the confusion was all hers.