Christopher “Kit” Bond sits with his sister, Kiley Harvey, near the Great Wall of China during a visit to China for treatments of his paralysis.

Kit Bond’s paralysis becomes inspiration for others

By ROBERT PIERCE

• Leader & Times

Christopher Bond graduated from Hugoton High School in 2000, and after finishing school, he led a pretty normal life.

“I had a lot going for me – beautiful girlfriend, full ride to K-State,” he said. “I was serving in the

military with a promising career in the Army ahead of me.”

On Aug. 2, 2003, Bond’s life was turned upside down.

“I was with a friend, and we were in an accident,” he said. “I woke up in the truck confused and unable to move my legs.”

Bond said his friend, who was driving the truck, had to pull him out because the truck had caught fire.

“I was later told that EMTs had to revive me at the scene,” he said. “When I was in ICU, I developed many complications.”

Bond said the worst part was internal bleeding that stopped his heart and breathing for five minutes. Before the accident, he weighed 220 pounds with about 8 percent body fat. Three weeks after, he was down to 135 pounds.

“Not the best way to cut weight,” he said.

While he was in the hospital, Bond’s girlfriend left him, he lost his scholarship to K-State and was discharged from the Army.

None of that nor being paralyzed from the chest down has slowed him down, though.

“It takes a lot more than that to keep me down,” he said. “I still do pretty much everything I did in the past, just slightly modified of course.”

Bond said a lot of people have misconceptions about people in wheelchairs.

“They don’t realize just how much we can do,” he said. “I like to hunt, drive, travel and pretty much anything.”

Bond even looks forward to raising a family and having kids.

“I try to do as much as I can in my chair, but I haven’t given up on the hope of walking yet,” he said.

In May 2005, Bond flew to Portugal to undergo an experimental spinal cord surgery, and the surgery took place on the day he would have graduated from college.

“The surgery took ole-factory tissue from my nose (tissue rich in stem cells) and implanted it into my spine where the injury was,” he said.

After the surgery, Bond went to Atlanta to do physical therapy, spending a year living downtown and enjoying the city.

“Along with therapy, I spent a lot of time talking to newly injured patients,” he said.

Bond said he wants to encourage anybody who gets injured to fight the injury and never give up on life.

“There are still so many things you do injured,” he said. “Just work hard.”

In Atlanta, Bond was introduced to wheelchair rugby, which he said is a great sport to play and watch.

“We use special wheelchairs and basically ‘attack’ the guy with the ball,” he said. “It’s full contact, and I love it.”

In May 2008, Bond flew to China to go through another stem cell operation, where his spinal cord was injected with stem cells from umbilical cord blood.

Bond was in China for five weeks undergoing the treatment, and he said he met some amazing people and was able to experience a culture unlike any other he had been blessed to come across.

“Things have worked great so far,” he said. “I’m getting a lot of sensation back and much more strength. I know it’s not the be-all, end-all, but it’s a step in that direction.”

On Saturday, Bond’s stepsister, Kiley Harvey, a 2004 graduate of Liberal High School and a 2006 graduate of Seward County Community College, will embark on a journey to run the New York City Marathon.

“I will be running through the five boroughs of NYC, representing the Christopher and Dana Reeves Foundation, in honor of my brother, Kit Bond,” she said.

Harvey said she is on a mission to raise awareness about paralysis, and she called Bond “my inspiration in life.”

“That accident left him confined to a wheel chair,” she said. “He is a classified quadriplegic, but it has not stopped him in his journey through life.”

In December, Bond will graduate with a masters in cell and molecular sciences from Wichita State.

Harvey said she is reaching out to area communities because she has been selected to not only honor her brother, but to represent the Christopher Reeves Foundation and the fight for paralysis via the NYC Marathon.

Along with running 26.2 miles to represent her brother’s struggles, Harvey has a goal to raise $4,000.

“I am asking for support from my family, friends and others as I have committed to running the NYC Marathon for the Christopher Reeve Foundation in honor of my brother, Kit Bond,” she said.

To donate, go to Harvey’s Web site at

www.christopherreeve.org/nyc2013/kileymichelle.

Harvey said the last 10 years have been a journey and a blessing for both her and Bond.

“I have watched Kit go from not being able to breathe on his own to graduating college and now getting his master's in cell and molecular sciences, while teaching undergraduate chemistry at Wichita State University,” she said. “In June of 2009, I had the privilege to travel with him to China and witness him receive stem cells.”

Harvey said although stem cells are a controversial issue, Bond used umbilical cord fluid for stem cells, stating “I’ll never kill a child for my legs.”

During his time in China, Harvey witnessed miracles, blind children receiving treatment and leaving “only six weeks later with unbelievable progress.”

“Kit has since received a total of four series of treatments,” she said. “With that and his amazing determination, his quality of life has drastically improved.”