

**WINDOWS
ON THE
NORTHLAND**

Rob and Missy Scott of Scott's Peaceful Valley Resort sent in this photo of a deer wading in Crane Lake.



US

INSIDE

John Updike takes a different storytelling route and gets lost. 4F

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SECTION F

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In a new book, Duluth native Matthew Sanford shares how reconnecting with his paralyzed body through yoga changed his life



LINDA HANSON / NEWS TRIBUNE

Matthew Sanford wrote much of his memoir, "Waking," in this office at the home he shares with his wife, Jennifer, and their 6-year-old son, Paul, in Orono, Minn.

Almo heave

TRENDS: Is Nevaeh 'it' name for baby girls? Parents' preoccupation coming up with creative names fuels a trend.

BY MOLLY MILLETT
ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS

For heaven's sake, with the name Nevaeh — spelled backward — the hot new name for babies in the nation — and even in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

"The name has exploded in popularity in the last three years. It literally came out of nowhere to be in the top 100 names in the nation," says Laura Wattenberg, a researcher and author of "Baby Name Wizard" (Bantam). "It's one of the 20 hottest names in terms of its rise from No. 70 on the list nationally to No. 65 in Minnesota."

The name may have originated in evangelical Christianity and then moved mainstream in 2000, when Christian pastor Sonny Sandoval of P.O. Duced America to his daughter, Nevaeh, during an appearance on the MTV celebrity show, "MTV Cribs."

The next year, Nevaeh was named in the Social Security Administration's top 1,000 baby names list at No. 266. It had climbed all the way up the list.

The name premièred in Minnesota's list in 2004, jumping 25 spots in 2005 and also showed up on Wisconsin's list in 2004 at No. 64 before jumping 26 spots to No. 38 last year.

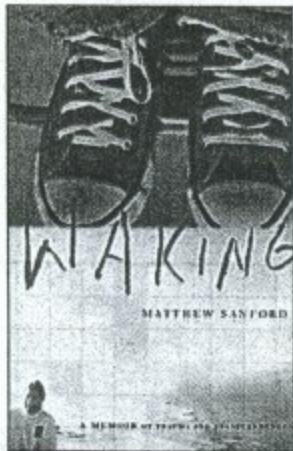
Charlotte and Jeremy of Sauk Rapids, Minn., were featured on the MTV episode. Sandoval explained his daughter's name was spelled backward.

"My husband and I said it," Charlotte Brantley said. "It was the only name we thought it was cool."

Their daughter, Nevaeh, is 5 1/2 years old.

Remaking the connection

Remaking the connection



If you go

■ A book release celebration for "Waking: A Memoir of Trauma and Transcendence" by Matthew Sanford (Rodale Books, \$23.95) is 5-9 p.m. Tuesday at Northland Country Club, 3901 E. Superior St. Sanford will speak at 6:30 p.m. and sign books, which will be available for purchase.

■ Sanford will have a book reading and signing from 1-3 p.m. Wednesday at Barnes & Noble Bookstore in the Mear Hill Mall.

■ For more information about Sanford and his work, go to www.matthewsanford.com or www.mindbodysolutions-mn.org.

BY LINDA HANSON
NEWS TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

After suffering a spinal cord injury that paralyzed him from the chest down, 13-year-old Matthew Sanford coped by distancing himself from his body.

During painful medical procedures he would imagine himself floating out of his body to escape. At one point, he wished his legs could be amputated because he considered them dead weight.

For years after the car accident, Sanford considered his body as something he lugged around. As a survival tool, he disconnected his mind from his body.

The Duluth native's journey to restore his mind-body connection is told in his book, "Waking: A Memoir of Trauma and Transcendence," which will be released Tuesday by Rodale Books. Sanford, 40, will be in Duluth to attend a book release celebration at Northland Country Club, where he caddied as a boy.

Sanford's memoir shares his life from the time he awoke from a three-day coma after a car accident, through his adolescence in Duluth and into manhood, where he awoke to the need to mend the connection between his mind and body. To do so, he turned to yoga.

"I needed to heal and find my body," Sanford said.

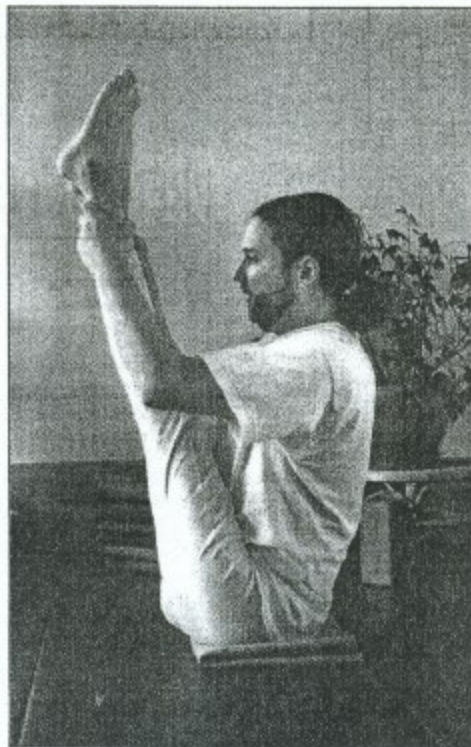


PHOTO COURTESY OF JENNIFER SANFORD

Matthew Sanford demonstrates a difficult yoga balancing pose called Ubhaya Padangusthasana in this photo taken in about 2002.

"I needed to heal and find my body."

MATTHEW SANFORD

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HEALING | *Yoga helped reintegrate mind, body*

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SEEKING HEALING

The accident that shaped Sanford's life happened in 1978 on the way home from a Thanksgiving trip. His family's car hit a patch of ice on an Iowa road and skidded off an overpass. Sanford's father, Loren Sanford, and his older sister, Laura, were killed. His mother, Paula, and older brother, James, escaped without injury.

"People in Duluth knew of the accident and what happened to my family. But people didn't know what I'd gone through," he said. "It kept me separate."

In the book, Sanford writes in intimate detail of his ordeal in hospitals and his growing sense as he became a young man that he needed a sort of healing he couldn't find through traditional medicine.

After graduating from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities with a philosophy degree, he earned a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Santa Barbara in California.

In 1991, with the help of a yoga teacher named Jo Zukovich, Sanford began doing Iyengar yoga, which focuses on stretching and proper body alignment in yoga moves. He began to listen to the long-silent parts of his body that were paralyzed. He now can feel what he describes as a surge of energy through his paralyzed body.

Sanford shares his passion for yoga by teaching it to disabled and able-bodied people. He started a nonprofit business called Mind Body Solutions that has a yoga studio in Minnetonka, Minn., and serves as a base for his mission to teach others about the importance of mind-body connection. He teaches workshops around the country.

His wife, Jennifer Sanford, is an important part of his life and his work. They knew each other at Ordean Junior High School and both graduated from East High School in 1984. After their first year of college, they lost contact until their 10th high school reunion, when a romance blossomed. Two years later they were married. The couple lives in a house set amid woods in Orono, Minn., on the western edge of the Twin Cities.

Sanford began writing his memoir six years ago, shortly after their son, Paul, was born. Paul's twin, William, had fluid on his brain—a condition called hydrocephalus—and died in utero.

Seeing life and death together like that was a clarifying event in his life and Sanford said he knew it was time for him to get serious about sharing what he had learned about the importance of the mind-body connection.

At the Duluth Writers' Workshop at the University of Minnesota Duluth, Sanford found encouragement for his writing. One of his teachers, Minnesota author Patricia Weaver Francisco, helped him fall in love with writing.

"I had to change from philosophical, academic writing to becoming a storyteller," he said.

Jennifer, who has a background in marketing and public relations, made sure that what he wrote had clarity. "We're a good team," he said.

STAYING POSITIVE

Mark and Ina Myles of Island Lake are long-time friends of the Sanfords.

Mark Myles, a former Duluth school district superintendent, met Sanford when he was a student at Congdon Elementary School and Myles was principal.

"Matt is a bright, sensitive human being and he always really was that," Myles said. "He would have stood out in any crowd of students."

Myles stayed in touch with the Sanford fam-



PHOTO COURTESY OF JENNIFER SANFORD

Matthew Sanford works with a student while teaching a class at Mind Body Solutions Yoga in Minnetonka, Minn.

ily. He advocated with school officials so Sanford, who was in a wheelchair, could join his friends at East High School. At the time, all students in wheelchairs attended Central, which was handicapped accessible.

Ina Myles and Jennifer Sanford are former co-workers who became good friends. She remembers how excited Jennifer was to reconnect with Matthew at their high school reunion.

"They have built such a wonderful life together," Ina Myles said. "It's amazing to me how compatible they are and how their strengths are so appropriate for the mission they are on."

Matthew is devoted to sharing his mind-body connection philosophy, Ina Myles said. "He's just a very sincere humanitarian soul who understands what human beings need to be fulfilled," she said.

Jennifer offers Matthew support — from emotional support to organizational skills and research, Ina Myles said.

Rob Barnes of Duluth met Matthew when they were on opposing Little League teams in Duluth. They got to know each other better at East High School and became college roommates.

"What draws people to him is a combination of things. He's very intelligent and he's got a great sense of humor," Barnes said about Sanford. "People kind of naturally take a liking to him. He's very engaging and easy to like."

Sanford is a positive person, he said. When they were roommates, Barnes said, he would forget for weeks at a time that Sanford had a physical handicap because Sanford did everything and went everywhere everyone else did.

"The handicap was not the focus of what he was about. It was a very small part of Matt," he said.

TRANSFORMING LIFE

Everyone faces trauma at some point in their lives. For most, it's not as dramatic as what happened to Sanford. He said he shares his life story in "Waking" as a way to talk about the importance of the mind-body connection and to let people know that the hard things that happen in life can be transformed.

"Amazing things happen a little bit at a time," Sanford said. "For me, it all came out of my listening to my own experience. It came out of starting to practice yoga and listening."

Sanford believes integrating the mind and body — feeling alive in your body — is one of the secrets to living well. He wants to help others realize that minds and bodies work best together. When they are separated, problems such as stress and obesity can result, he said.

But even more than being a personal health strategy, mind-body integration is a movement of consciousness that can transform the world, Sanford said.

When people are more aware, he believes, they treat each other better and make the world a better, more compassionate place.