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Checking things off the 'bucket list'

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TOWN OF TWO RIVERS - The movie "The Bucket List" came out about two years ago. In it, the characters make a list of things they want to do before they "kick the bucket," so to speak. Now, a cancer patient from from the Lakeshore has made his list - and is fulfilling it.

Eric McLean has been pretty busy these days. Sunday, he threw out the first pitch at the Milwaukee Brewers game. Just last week he jumped out of a plane with SkyDive Adventure, which provided him with video of the event.

"A lot's been going through my mind," said Eric before skydiving. "I wanted to do this for a long time, and I've got good reasons to do it this time."

Those good reasons include quality time with people he loves, because Eric doesn't know how much longer he'll

have the opportunity to do things like drive a Dodge Viper.

The fun things Eric's been doing these last few days, are all on his bucket list.

"I think that's what it's all about, just hitting it strong and not looking back," said Eric.

Eric is hitting life strong because he has been hit with acute myelogenous leukemia for the third time. Eric says he and his doctors can't say when the leukemia will progress.

"The cells replicate at a pretty fast rate of speed and the first few times I was diagnosed it all happened within weeks, maybe a month," said Eric.

Eric was first diagnosed six years ago, when he was 18, and got a stem cell transplant from his older brother Mike. A few years later, he relapsed, and got a stem cell transplant from his younger sister Lindsey. And just ten days ago, Eric's mother Mary was expecting a call to wish her a happy birthday, but got devastating news instead.

"I told him right there and then, I said I brought you into this world and I'm not letting you go without a fight," said Mary McLean. "We're going to give it our best, give it everything we have. If he doesn't have that long to be here, we're going to make whatever he has left happy. And there's going to be a time when those smiles won't be there, but at least we know that we've made the memories that we can."

Eric's doctors told him they could start chemotherapy right away, and perhaps prolong his life, or enjoy life now, and start treatment when he starts showing more symptoms. For now, he's working on his bucket list.

"Eric's a pretty unique person," said Eric's brother Mike McLean, "He doesn't seem fazed by it. It's just another obstacle, just the way he communicates and speaks, he's supposed to look up to me, it's the other way around."

When Eric isn't checking things off his bucket list, he spends time relaxing in the family garden.

"Trying just to live life to the fullest is real cliché but that kind of encompasses all of it, just sitting out here and listening to the water and the birds. (A) typical person might just be like, 'oh cool,' but it's just so much more beautiful to me. I don't know, I wish I could explain it."

Whatever his future holds, Eric McLean, is facing it head on.

"I'm not just going to sit down and let this run its course and do what it wants to do without me putting up some kind of fight or enjoying life as much as I can while I can," said Eric.

Eric says he will start chemotherapy when he shows more symptoms of leukemia. He is grateful for all the help he's getting checking things off his list, often from complete strangers.

[Click here to learn more about McLean's story, read his journal, and see what else he has planned for the bucket list.](#)

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