Sawyer Cyze awaits the start of his homecoming parade with his family and Iowa County Sheriff's deputies.

Faith, family and community converge to celebrate a miracle

By Mirka Knaby

Johnny Sawyer Cyze just wanted to go home. He heard the magic words of a senior nurse and he did not care who heard what was standing in his way. He got there. Last Tuesday night a son, Sawyer, and the family reunited for the fabled second day. They were greeted, surrounded by those folks he met in charge — and even a couple of magical nurses — at welcome home party, a full-on parade

from watchers

Sending Home It was still raining on Tuesday when Rose on the way from Sawyer Road to Dodgeville's Underwoods — a distance of nearly half a mile. Sawyer in a stone Maddie, and parents Ron and Missy rode in a convertible as grandfather the road with family and friends followed in vehicles. Iowa-Grant Sheriff's Office Chris Cramer led the way.

Sawyer's family was met by a large welcoming crowd at Pleasant Ridge Elementary School, where Sawyer is a first-grader. Sawyer's uniform was

the key when he was a victim in a drive-by shooting in Madison on Feb. 14. Sawyer was shot in the head and neck while sitting in the family car in front of his home on Madison's East Side. Sawyer's mother, Missy Cyze, was also shot in the head and neck. Both were rushed to UW Hospital and Clinics, where they underwent surgery and treatment.

Sawyer was released from the hospital on March 1 and his mother on March 3. Both continue to undergo outpatient therapy.

"The way I see it, the Underwoods were from Sawyer's school," she said. "We have a lot of ties to Sawyer's school, and it was not only involved the family of Sawyer, but also the whole community. So I felt, what could we do to support and help Sawyer's family. We thought, 'Let's do a welcome home party,' and have everybody meet at the school. Maddie was taken it."

Cramer said Sawyer's return

was a great way to bring the community of Iowa-Grant together. "It was a way to bring everybody together to celebrate the end of a long ordeal," he said. "It was a time that allowed the community to support Sawyer and his family.

"The reason we chose to help Sawyer's family was necessary to forward it to a welcome home party is because it was a part of a journey from the beginning. Whether they've brought Sawyer's, given blood, shared their time,

Continued on page 2