My name is Nicholas Bunker. I am currently 20 years old and five years seizure free since my hemispherectomy. I had my first seizure when I was 13 years old, and after almost two years of failing to control the seizures I traveled to Cleveland Clinic to have a hemispherectomy on November 9 2005.

 Extremely hard days followed the surgery with many life threatening complications. I traveled back to University of Michigan Mott hospital to begin physical, occupational, and speech therapy. It was a frustrating experience dealing with left paralysis but I tried to stay positive and work hard in therapy to gain back the movement I had lost. One of the biggest challenges while in the hospital was trying to keep up with school work between therapy sessions that started early and ended late each day. I had already missed six months of school and knew I wouldn’t be returning anytime soon. After several months of therapy while in a wheelchair I accomplished my goal of being able to walk again. By the end of the school year I had finished all the school work that was required to complete my freshman year of high school.

 I graduated in 2009 with my class despite missing more than a year of school. I faced many challenges each day. Simple tasks that I took for granted when having use of both of my hands became a burden and forced me to compensate anyway I could to accomplish what I needed. Some classes at school were much harder than before my surgery, particularly math, which I barely passed. I quickly adjusted to the changes in my life and became well aware of my abilities that I had with only one hand. Now any task at my job, in school, or any other daily tasks is relatively easy. I simply discovered my own way of doing things.

I started at Schoolcraft College in the fall of 2009. I succeeded in all the courses I have taken, although math is still very challenging. After two years of working at a pet store and going to school at Schoolcraft I have completed most of my general education courses needed for any college degree. I recently was accepted to Grand Valley State University.

I will be moving to Grand Rapids in the fall of 2011, where I will finish my Bachelor’s degree in broadcasting and hopefully start a career. Many forms of help have been offered to me in school since my surgery however I have remained stubborn when it comes to accepting any kind of help. I feel much more accomplished, succeeding strictly by my own hard work. Moving to a new place and going to a new school makes me nervous and I’m sure I will face many more challenges, academically, socially, and eventually in a new job.

 One of the biggest challenges I have faced in my adult life is not being able to drive. With the help of family and friends I have been able to have transportation to anywhere I need to be, but it will be a challenge to find sufficient transportation when I move out on my own. Despite the problems I will face on my own, I know I will continue to overcome challenges and succeed.