The Boy in the Bubble

Make a list (point form on a piece of paper) of important events in your life (ones that you remember strongly). Share with a partner and compare these events to each other. How would these events been affected if you had lived in a bubble like David? What experiences did David not get to have? What experiences did he have, but maybe they looked a little different?

Why do you think David eventually left the bubble twice (once with a suit in 1977) and finally once without a suit even though he knew it might kill him?

Did the doctors who treated David act correctly in giving the advice they did to David’s parents in the following situations? Think about what the Hippocratic Oath (linked on my website) means, did they follow this oath?
- when the Letters first asked the doctors whether they should try to have another child, after the death of their first son due to SCID (Severe Combined Immunodeficiency)
- when it was clear that David’s sister was not a match to him
- when doctors were considering doing an experimental procedure to transplant the sister’s bone marrow even though she wasn’t a match?

Should David have been removed from the bubble once doctors knew that his sister’s bone marrow was NOT a match?

David’s story has been retold using music, movies and tv sitcoms, if you were David how would you react to being present in this was in popular culture.

During David’s life there were a lot of medical advances such as the development of the artificial heart, polio vaccine, respirator or “iron lung,” penicillin, pacemaker, chemotherapy, and birth control pill, and surgical advances such as the first coronary bypass, heart transplant, separation of conjoined twins, and kidney transplant.) How do you think these advances affected the advice that David’s doctors gave to David’s parents?

The estimated cost of David’s treatment was 1.3 million dollars in 1977 (today $5 million), do you think that this money could have been used elsewhere more affectively. For example: using the money to help other sick children?

Should the money have been distributed to the people who were most in need?
Should the money have gone to the largest amount of people?
Should the money have gone to those who would have benefited most from it?
Should the money have been spent elsewhere besides other people? (ex: buildings, funding schools etc.)
If David had NOT been born with SCID, do you think the money that went to help David would have been spent elsewhere? Why or why not?