

30 Days/30 Stories®

Blaze

Diagnosed with B-cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL)

Blaze turned 8 years old on May 11th, 2018. He was very energetic, a lover of all animals (especially his reptiles), and just funny and always laughing. A very strong little boy for his age. He's always been a bit quiet due to a learning disability, for which he does speech therapy and occupational therapy. But that changed not even two more months later when he was diagnosed with B-cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL). For those who aren't aware what ALL is, it is a cancer of the blood and bone marrow that affects white blood cells.

On July 6th, 2018, Blaze went to his father's house to celebrate the 4th of July. His dad called me saying Blaze was complaining of leg pains. He also was a few days before, so it seemed to be growing pains or from too much running around. On the morning of July 8th, Blaze couldn't put any weight on his legs and was crying hysterically, so his father took him to the emergency room while I was at work. There, they did blood work and realized his blood counts were extremely low so they emergently transported him to Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's Hospital.

After a night in the hospital and further testing, on July 9th, 2018, his father called to tell me that Blaze was diagnosed with cancer. I was hysterical. I stopped at my grandparents after work and that's where I realized I had no idea how to react, how to deal with it, imagining the pain and how scared he was. He went for surgery to get his port put in and started chemotherapy right away. Blaze struggles with speech and learning disabilities, so it took a bit to get him to communicate with the doctors about his pain levels and to understand what was happening.

He got released from the hospital on July 21st, 2018 and has been doing great since. He lost all of his hair and was afraid of eventually going back to school because he was bald. He cried to me so much about being made fun of, and my heart broke for him. We're all so proud of him and how well he is taking all this.

It's now been over a year since his diagnosis, and we have a long road ahead… but he is in clinical remission!!! He's already had multiple spinal taps and blood transfusions, But Blaze is a trooper and is taking it all so well. You never expect it to happen to your child, and when it does, your whole world flips upside down. I'm Blazes full-time caretaker and a stay-at-home mom, so things are rough. Thankfully I have the support of my high school crush who can relate to our situation because his dad also had cancer and lost his battle. He became my shoulder and rock. Blaze loves him so much and has happily accepted him into our lives.

The Pediatric Center of the Lehigh Valley has been so helpful with gas cards and cafeteria cards, school supplies, and even gifts. It took a lot going to chemo every week, plus PT, emergencies and so on. But now he rarely goes for chemo…just blood checks. He takes all his chemo at home and he's doing wonderfully. He's turning back into that child who was active and interested in everything. Since his diagnoses he's gotten extremely interested in healing stones and crystals, which do seem to give him comfort.

It's definitely not easy for parents with children with cancer, but somehow we get through it. Childhood cancer is not rare, and these children did not choose this disease. They deserve the world. If you would like to support Blaze in his journey, please search for the group #BlazesArmyleukemiaawareness

Written by Blaze's mother, Katrina

If you would like to donate in Blaze's honor Click Here

Photos by: Ryan Fisher of the Lehigh Valley Photography Group (www.lvpgphotos.smugmug.com/FB:@lvpgphotos/IG:@ig_lvpg)

Sponsored By: OLYMPUS®