

30 Days/30 Stories®

Harrison

Diagnosed with T-Cell Lymphoblastic Lymphoma in January 2016 and the age of 12

We sat there with him, allowed our family to say their goodbyes and held his hand while he left this earth on March 20, 2018.

Cancer and treatment were such a part of our lives for two years. When he passed, it just stopped! It was like being from a divorced family. The doctors and nurses that cried with us and comforted our child for two years were no longer in our life. We would no longer see the other kids and their families that we had come to know over the years. The security blanket of these people, of the hospital was gone, and we were left to navigate through grief on your own.

Not every day is a good day. How can it be when a big part of your world isn't there anymore? Our days continue to contain heartache and sorrow. Pain lingers, and we realize that some scars will never fully heal. We think about what should have been. We begin to live life on the other side of cancer. We live life for the kids who are still fighting, because we know that's what Harrison would want. This is his legacy.

There are sprinkles of goodness. There are shoulders to cry on, and ears that will listen. There are friendships that have endured decades and brand-new ones forged from families sharing the same pain. There are compassionate nurses. There are caring parents, compassionate spouses, loyal siblings forced to grow up too quick, loving grandparents, and thoughtful aunts, uncles and cousins. There is love. There is gratefulness for each new day. We hold onto hugs tighter because they make the heartache and sorrow a little lighter. We never asked to be the family that people look at with sad eyes. We never asked to be the ones that put a damper on the light-hearted mood. We didn't want to be a symbol of sadness, sickness, or worry. But now that we are, some people avoid us. We make them too sad, even when we say nothing at all. We overwhelm and depress them when we try to express our challenges.

For those who don't avoid, and choose to listen, whether it's a friend, acquaintance, or stranger, something beautiful happens. We feel their engagement in our story. When someone listens with a caring heart, our feelings are validated, and we see that our life matters. We see that Harrison's life mattered. The sorrow is lighter for a moment in time. We become more than a sad story. We become a family worth caring about.

I hope that people who listen to our story leave the conversation not just with sadness or fear, but also with perspective and gratitude. I hope that they recognize how valuable their friendship is to us during a time of need. I hope that they go home and hug their families, go out and pursue their passions, and always look for ways to be kind.

During overwhelming stresses, devastating heartache, and anger at the unfairness of life, we try our best to remember, hold onto the joy Harrison brought to so many – especially his parents and his sister. We miss you dearly, sweet boy, and carry you in our hearts every day!

Written by Harrison's mom, Danielle

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

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