

30 Days/30 Stories®

Maddie

Diagnosed with leukemia at 5 years old

It's been 21 months since our now 6 year-old Maddie was diagnosed with cancer. Shortly after her fifth birthday, at Christmas, she came down with a high fever. We were so fortunate that our pediatrician recognized immediately the extent of her sickness and we soon found out she had leukemia. I can still play through my head every moment of that first day she was diagnosed. I find myself more emotional now seeing pictures of last year as she gradually lost her hair and as her body went through various changes.

After 8 months of receiving chemotherapy orally, intravenously, and into her spinal fluid on a weekly/every other week basis, she graduated to the maintenance phase of her treatment in September 2018. Just 2 weeks prior to maintenance, her oncologist approved her to start Kindergarten on the very first day along with all her other classmates - this was a dream come true for all of us. She marched into that school with a head of peach fuzz and a big smile on her face ready and eager to learn. She graduated Kindergarten with a full head of hair and the ability to read entire children's books and count up to 1000! She applied and was picked to be one of the Honored Heroes for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society - her story will help schools raise money to fight cancer.

Over this past year, she continues to take oral chemotherapy every day, IV chemotherapy once a month, and spinal taps once every 3 months. We hit another milestone this past June - 18 months after diagnosis and receiving treatment, her risk of recurrence dropped down to 0.5%. We continue to go along with all the doctors' advice because she is doing so well and will continue to do so. We look forward to March 5, 2020 - the last day she will receive chemotherapy.

Cancer is a beast and affects each and every person in some way. A mother who lost her son to brain cancer sympathized with me that cancer still sucks, even if your child will be ok - I appreciated that very much. Even though it's been a long journey so far, and we still have a ways to go, I am forever grateful we are one of the fortunate ones. Thank you to all the doctors, nurses, and researchers of the present and past, who care just as much as all the parents about making these children healthy again.

We experienced the PCFLV Ready Set Gold Walk for the first time this past Spring - we had a blast. Team Maddie came in second place for fundraising - thanks to all of you who donated! Our family has so many great memories and new experiences that we cherish as a result of PCFLV and other cancer family support groups. Thank you for all the good times and all you do!

Written by Maddie's mom, Toni

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

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

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