

30 Days/30 Stories®

Porter

Diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia

Hearing the phrase, "Your child has cancer" is one of the most devastating things you can ever hear. That's what I thought, anyway. It was bad. I was mad. My son was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, which has one of the highest cure rates for all childhood cancers. He "got the good one," we were told.

I remember feeling such a sense of loss and grief at this news (along with the fear and helplessness). I somehow couldn't stop thinking about the fact that the three and a half years of chemotherapy he would have to endure would take him to middle school. I felt like cancer was robbing him of the last bit of his childhood.

Amazingly, we made it through those three and a half years. And even though we'd had some bumps and bruises along the way, he was still in one piece. A thriving, happy and healthy almost-teenager. We began to pick up the pieces and put the puzzle that is our life back together. There was a huge sense of relief. However there is always a sense of fear for whatever it is that may be lurking.

Fast forward four years. He grew into a smart, handsome teenager. A kid who loved high school and everything to do with it. He was doing well in school and had surrounded himself with the most wonderful group of friends. His regular checkup sailed by, everything looked right as rain.

A month later (seven years almost to the day of his first diagnosis) a visit to the pediatrician led to the ER for some heart tests and low and behold, the moment I wasn't waiting for but feared forever. The doctor came in and said those horrid words, "your child has cancer, again.". This time, we were both angry. He was in high school, lead in the fall play, ready to take on the world. Instead, he had to get ready to take on cancer one more time.

Somehow, I had this thought that since we'd done this before, it would be so much easier. Ha! Was I ever wrong. The protocol was much more aggressive than last time, the emotion was higher, the fear of the unknown looming.

He has done incredibly well over the last ten months, being his usual self. Always cracking a joke, smiling, and worrying about the wellbeing of others. His friends have helped carry him through. It has been amazing to see the outpouring of love and support from our community. I don't know how we would have made it this far without that. The programs offered through the hospital and organizations like PCFLV have helped in so many ways. When they say it takes a village, it's no lie.

Written by Porter's mom, Jen

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