

# A Team for Tay

type guy” who was great for Taylin.

Dr. Frisk did a biopsy in September of last year, which came back negative. However, the lump was still there, and Karla wanted to know why. One possibility was that it was an enlarged lymph node, but they didn't know for sure. They met with Dr. Frisk again in January. He referred them to another colleague who removed three lymph nodes. It was then that the cancer was diagnosed.

Taylin then had a PET scan on a Friday to determine where and what stage to which the cancer had progressed. Karla said the wait over the weekend seemed like an eternity. They had so many unanswered questions at that point, but things progressed quickly after the diagnosis. The doctor told them on a Tuesday that the tests had come back positive, and by the following Wednesday Taylin was admitted at Sanford in Fargo for the first set of four chemotherapy treatments.

When Taylin and her parents traveled to Fargo for her second chemotherapy treatment, she was hospitalized for the first two days with both of her parents staying overnight in the hospital room with her. The following three days of treatment were then on an outpatient basis. They spent the week in Fargo as Taylin underwent four days of treatment.

Her third round of treatment had been scheduled to begin the week of April 9 but

her counts were too low, according to doctors. Her neutrophils, a type of white blood cell that leads the immune systems response, have to be at a certain level before she can start chemotherapy again. Her neutrophil levels were at 500 and they need to be at 750 before they re-start chemotherapy. Karla said the body needs to build them on its own; it's a matter of her body recovering and rebuilding. They keep her away from people who are sick as much as they possibly can and have been keeping her home from school during this time to keep her as germ-free as possible.

Taylin recently had a PET scan that showed that the chemotherapy appears to be working. She still needs to take two more rounds of chemotherapy, and then a decision will be made regarding radiation. At this point, Karla and her husband Ryan, have been told that radiation is not the desired treatment because of the placement of her tumor and the effect that it might have on her thyroid.

When Taylin goes for her treatments, her inpatient stay is in the new Sanford hospital, but her outpatient chemotherapy is at the Roger Maris Cancer Center in downtown Fargo. The Jacobson family has been impressed with the level of care there. Karla said “They're pretty awesome at Sanford. They have child life specialists who come in and work with the kids, do projects with them, and bring in movies, I-pads and games. There is even a teacher who comes in to work with them. It's pretty amazing.”

There's also a huge playroom the kids can go in if their counts are good enough, with Smart Boards, games and other fun things. If their counts aren't good enough, patients may just need to wear a mask or they might even be

designated a special time to go in by themselves.

The first day of treatment was really scary for the family, but there was an amazing nurse who just seemed to know the right things to say and do that would help them the most. The nurses are specialized; and Karla said that there is a certification that is necessary even to hang a bag of chemo. She said the safety precautions that are taken during chemotherapy are impressive, with the double checks and two-person sign-offs. The strength of the medicine is also driven home when you see the masked, goggled and double-gloved professionals who are working with it.

They were able to stay at the Ronald McDonald House for Taylin's second treatment, which Karla says is very impressive, especially the organization that it must take just to schedule the volunteers to make meals, provide comfort bags and make a family's stay as comfortable as possible.

It was when Karla talked about the outpouring of help from volunteers, the community and from friends that she teared up. “This community has been so amazing. Everyone has been so kind,” Karla continued. “We have gotten tremendous support with prayers, phone calls, gifts of money, gas cards and food cards; everyone has been so amazing.”

Taylin has been missing school and Karla says she sometimes feels torn on whether she should be making Taylin work on her schoolwork at home or if she should just focus on getting her better. “Taylin's teacher, Mrs. Skogen has been so amazing to us,” Karla said. “She should be commended for everything that she does.” The sentiments offered to Taylin by her classmates have been heartwarming with their hand-made cards and blanket.

Karla said that Taylin has gone through times when she has been pretty scared of the needles and the uncertainty of not knowing what is going to happen when she is hospitalized, but through it all they've been amazed at her brave spirit.

“If I were to start to cry with Taylin in the room, she would come to me and hug me and say ‘Mom, don't cry, it's gonna be okay,’” Karla continued. “She's a brave little girl.”

The Jacobson's have five kids, Kindra, Hunter, Bailey, Layton and Taylin. Although it's been a hard situation, the kids are all coping with what the family is going through. The oldest, Kindra, has really stepped up and is helping out with maturity beyond her years, even coming down to the hospital to sit with Taylin during treatment. As the “baby” in the family, the entire family tends to dote on her and her other brothers and sisters are asking to be able to come and be with her during treatment too.

A benefit is scheduled for Taylin and her family on Thursday, April 26 at the New Rockford Eagles Club in New Rockford from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. There will be a free will donation supper with a taco and baked potato bar along with a silent auction and raffle. Direct cash or check gifts to the Taylin Jacobson Benefit account that has been set up at Bank Forward in New Rockford.

The Jacobson's hope to be able to attend the benefit, but it will be dependent on where Taylin is in her treatment. They do want the community to know how much they are appreciated. It's pretty awesome how a community comes together for people,” Karla concluded. “It's times like these that really drive home how valuable it is to raise your kids in a community like this one.”



*Taylin Jacobson is currently undergoing chemotherapy for Hodgkin's lymphoma.*

**by Allison Lindgren**

Six-year-old Taylin Jacobson of Sheyenne was diagnosed with stage 4 Hodgkin's lymphoma in February. A benefit is set for Thursday, April 26 at the New Rockford Eagles Club from 4 - 7 p.m. to help raise funds for her continued treatment.

Taylin's mother Karla said that the diagnosis was stage 4 because the cancer was found in more than one area of her body, both in her neck and in her abdomen.

Hodgkin's lymphoma, according to the Mayo Clinic website, is a cancer of the lymphatic system, which is part of the immune system. It may affect people of any age but is most common in people between 20 and 40 years old and those over 55. In Hodgkin's lymphoma, cells in the lymphatic system grow abnormally and may spread beyond it. The website also says that advances in diagnosis and treatment of Hodgkin's lymphoma, have helped give people with this disease the chance for a full recovery and the prognosis continues to improve.

Taylin's cancer was discovered when she had a lump on the right side of her neck; a lump that her mother said was clearly visible and actually stuck out. She never complained about it hurting and it didn't seem to affect her. In fact, Karla said that you would have never known that she was sick. Initially, her mother thought maybe it was her tonsils or a swollen gland, so she took Taylin to see Dr. Michael Page at CHI St. Alexius Carrington Medical Center. Dr. Page then referred her to Dr. John Frisk of Plains Ear, Nose and Throat in Fargo, who also provides medical care at Carrington Medical Clinic. Smiling as she spoke of Dr. Frisk, Karla commented on how he was just a “grandpa-