



### PETITION TO INCREASE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER RESEARCH

Andrew Mercier was diagnosed with Acute lymphoblastic leukemia at the age of 9 years old. ALL is a type of cancer of the blood and bone marrow that affects white blood cells. It is the most common childhood cancer. It arises when a bone marrow cell develops errors in its DNA. This type of cancer often progresses quickly and if left untreated, it would likely be fatal within a few months. Symptoms can include enlarged lymph nodes, bruising, fever, bone pain, and frequent infections. The 5-year survival rate for ALL is 68.8%.

Andrew began feeling exhausted after school each day. He often complained of leg pain. At first, we thought this was due to growing pains. When the pain continued, we took Andrew to see his doctor. We were told our son had the flu and were sent home. As the pain progressed, we took him back to the doctor a second time. This time we were told Andrew had strep throat and were once again sent home. We knew at this point after he continued feeling pain in his legs and feeling fatigued daily that this was not just the flu bug. We took him back to see the doctor and blood tests were finally done. On Easter Sunday, 2 days before his 10<sup>th</sup>

birthday, our world shattered. The tests came back and showed that he had leukemia. We could not believe what we were hearing. I tried convincing myself that this was just a bad dream, but it was our new reality. It crushed our son's spirit as we had to cancel his birthday party. I will never forget the look on my son's face when he knew he would be spending his special day going through chemotherapy treatments.

These treatments were extremely hard on our son. The side effects are often as bad if not worse than the cancer itself. He was constantly sick laying in a hospital bed. It was torture not being able to take away our sweet boys' pain or fear. He went through 8 months of chemotherapy and each treatment was worse than the last. As each month passed by and he did not improve, Andrew knew he was going to die. As a parent there is absolutely nothing more painful than knowing you would soon be planning your child's funeral. My husband and I watched our son die. Our son watched himself fade away. To this day we are still struggling to process this loss. Andrew was always so full of life. He loved being around his friends and was such a happy child. Cancer destroyed the future our son was supposed to have. We will forever grieve our loss but are determined to be his voice for him. There are too many families in our position and we deserve to be heard.

About 10,470 children in the United States will be diagnosed with childhood cancer. 1 out of 6 children with cancer in America do not survive five years. Despite advances in medicine, some types of cancer remain incurable. As of 2020, there have only been six new drugs developed for childhood cancer. 1 in 285 children will be diagnosed with cancer before their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. Globally, roughly 400,000 children are diagnosed with cancer each year. 44% of childhood cancer cases worldwide are never diagnosed. Roughly 1,050 children under the age of 15 are expected to die from cancer in 2022. There are far too many children having to go through this and too many families losing their children due to cancer. It is so important that we do all we can to see the 4% federal funding for childhood cancer research rise to 8%.

My husband and I now run a nonprofit organization called Andrew's Laughing Gas in memory of our son. As Andrew fought Leukemia, one thing that brought him the most joy and laughs was his remote-controlled farting machine. Andrew was a jokester and loved to hear the sounds that machine made and enjoyed everyone's reaction when he would play it. We knew we wanted to give back to children still fighting this horrific disease. Along with a great group of people, we construct stuffed animals that have a farting machine inside and gift them to children fighting childhood cancer so that they too can get some joy in such a dark time in their lives. We know Andrew would want us to do this and carry on his legacy.

The federal government at this time is allocating a mere 4% for funding for childhood cancer research. This is not enough funding to make a difference. By signing this petition, you will be helping facilitate lobbying and the advance of a healthcare policy that will designate a higher percentage of resources for childhood cancer research. We need 12 million signatures in order to take the next step in this process. Help us to be the voice of those who no longer have one and for those still fighting. Please sign and share this petition and help make a difference for children all over the world.

**[CLICK HERE TO SIGN](#)**