



PETITION TO INCREASE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER RESEARCH

Grant Hock was diagnosed at the tender age of 2 years old with Embryonal rhabdomyosarcoma on October 31st, 2019. This is a malignant soft tissue tumor that is formed from embryonic skeletal muscle tissue. In many cases, a quickly growing tumor is what causes noticeable symptoms. This type of cancer is treated with chemotherapy, surgery and radiation. With early diagnosis and treatment, 80% of children with embryonal rhabdomyosarcoma will survive with today's treatment options. But sadly, for kids whose tumors grow back or when the cancer spreads to other areas of the body, they face a major challenge. AS of right now, there is still no effective targeted therapy for these children. The 5-year survival rate for this type of cancer who have a low-risk rhabdomyosarcoma range from 70% to 90%. For children in the intermediate-risk group ranges from roughly 50% to 70%. Sadly, when the cancer becomes high-risk that range decreases to 20% to 30%.

Grant was experiencing pain in his right ear and we thought he had an ear infection. He also had a rash on his body. The day he was experiencing the most pain in his ear, I immediately took him to see a doctor. He was diagnosed with bilateral ear infections. Within 3 days, he had a crust that surrounded his right ear canal. I took him to his pediatrician that same day and we were given ear drops to apply and sent home. Once home, I applied the ear drops and I could see what appeared to be a tumor growing out of his right ear. The doctor then thought it could

be a granuloma (a small area of inflammation) and gave us some steroid ointment. Unfortunately, the tumor began to grow so I took him directly to the Children's hospital 3 days after his pediatrician appointment. He was then diagnosed 11 days after his ear infection diagnosis. I felt completely overwhelmed with sadness and I was scared for our son. We had no idea what to expect or even how to process the diagnosis. It was as if we were hit head on by a bus. We did not see it coming but that is what cancer does. There is never any warning.

During Grant's original course of treatments before radiation, the cancer had spread to his brain and spinal cord. Treatments took so much out of our son. We could do nothing to take his pain or fear away. It was agonizing to watch what he went through and we will never forget all of the horrific things we witnessed him experience. Radiation caused burns on his back from the base of his neck to the bottom of his buttocks. Hair loss and constant pain was also something he had to endure. With each treatment he would be sick for days but there were no other options for treatments. Watching him lose his smile and never get it back was very hard to witness. He fought for 7 months before losing his battle on May 23rd, 2020, only 3 months after his 3rd birthday. Our family has suffered a great deal and we are not the same, we never will be. Cancer took so much away from us and we still grieve our loss every single day. Our daughter who was Grant's best friend suffers anxiety and anytime we have to leave her for any reason, she panics because she fears we will not come back like her brother. Not only did cancer affect our son, it affected each one of us. I will never stop trying to spread awareness on childhood cancer until a vaccine or a cure is found. It is my passion to be a voice for my son because he no longer has one.

Each year, approximately 10,470 children are diagnosed with cancer in the United States. Childhood cancer research is consistently underfunded. Less than 4% of the federal budget for cancer research is dedicated to childhood cancer. Cancer is the leading cause of death by disease in American children, resulting in the death of roughly 1,800 children each year. In the U.S. 84% of children diagnosed with cancer are alive at least 5 years after diagnosis;

however, this does not mean they are cured or free from long-term effects. Children who were treated for cancer are twice as likely to suffer chronic health conditions later in life as a result of cancer treatments versus children without a history of cancer.

Right now, the federal government is allocating a scant 4% for federal funding for childhood cancer research. This is not nearly enough funding to make a difference. By signing this petition, you will help facilitate lobbying and the advance of a healthcare policy that will reserve a higher percentage of resources for childhood cancer research. This will permit researchers additional funding to perhaps find a childhood cancer vaccine that will aide in treatments that would ultimately be less aggressive on these children's bodies. This is why it is so crucial to see that 4% rise to 8%. We are in need of 12 million signatures to advance to the next step in making this happen. Please stand with us by signing and sharing this petition and doing all we can for these children and their families.

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