



PETITION TO INCREASE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER RESEARCH

Joshua James Glaum Jr. was diagnosed in May of 2019 at the age of 10 with Acute myeloid leukemia. AML is one of the most lethal blood cancers that takes more than 10,000 lives in the United States each year. It is a type of cancer of the blood and bone marrow with excess immature white blood cells. AML progresses rapidly, with myeloid cells interfering with the production of normal blood cells, red blood cells and platelets. The most common symptoms of this type of cancer are fatigue, recurrent infections and bruising easily. Treatments for this type of cancer include chemotherapy, other drug therapy and stem-cell transplants. The 5-year survival rate for this cancer is 69% in children under the age of 20 years of age.

Joshua began coming home from school each day with random bruises all over his body. At first, I was convinced that he was being bullied but he assured me they were just from playing sports and rough housing with other boys at school. The bruises were small at first but as time went on, they became much larger in size. Summer came and we had put up our pool for the kids to swim in. Swimming was one of Joshua's favorite things to do in the Summer. He never missed a chance and had been swimming since he was just months old. The first day the kids wanted to go swimming, he told me he was very tired and just wanted to stay in his room in bed and watch television. That was a huge red flag for me because he never missed an

opportunity to swim. I knew right then something was not right. A few days later he had an appointment to see his pediatrician for his monthly med check due to suffering from ADHD and bi polar mood swings that he had been medicated for since age 3. My Father was the person taking him to the appointment as I had an appointment at that same time, so I asked him to have them check his iron levels. I had thought his issue was low levels of iron due to his bruising and lack of energy just getting out of bed. Labs were drawn and they immediately sent him to UC Davis medical center for further testing.

Within a day we were given the worst news imaginable. Our sweet boy had cancer. There was no time to even process that news because everything from there happened so quickly. A port was placed and chemotherapy was started immediately. I cannot even begin to explain how difficult it was watching our son go through treatments and not be able to take away his pain or fear. The side effects alone were extremely hard to watch him go through. No child should have to endure what our child had to. By October of 2019 Joshua was transferred to Lucille Packard children's hospital for a stem cell transplant. We prayed this would help but sadly that was not the case and he lost his life to cancer on March 15th, 2020, shortly after his 11th birthday. He fought so hard and was more brave than any child I know.

Each year in the United States there are an estimated 15,780 children between the ages of birth and 19 years of age who are diagnosed with cancer. Approximately 1 in 285 children in the United States will be diagnosed with cancer before their 20th birthday. Globally there are more than 300,000 children diagnosed with cancer each year. 1 out of 6 children with cancer in America do not survive 5 years. Sadly, despite advances in medicine some types of cancer remain incurable. As of 2020, only six new drugs have been developed for childhood cancer. This is why it is so crucial that we see the 4% federal funding rise to 8%. Too many children are losing their battle to this horrific disease and more needs to be done to find a cure.

Cancer comes at you when you least expect it. There is no warning sign until its often too late. It tears families apart and can cause great financial burden. We lost our home and our son. I lost my job as well. Losing our son has taken a huge toll on our marriage which is often the case for other families who have lost their child to childhood cancer. Joshua was my oldest biological son and my everything. I feel empty inside and have more bad days than good. We have watched many of our family members and friends step away from us after losing our son. That has been extremely difficult. Where we live there are no support groups that we can attend just to talk about what this loss has done to us or to speak with other families who have gone through the same hell. We are still grieving our loss and I'm not sure that will ever stop. I miss my son so much and I am still completely broken. The one thing my son was terrified of and often expressed, was that he was afraid he would be forgotten if he did not beat cancer. I promised him I would never let that happen. I am more passionate than ever to make sure his voice is heard by speaking about him and educating others about childhood cancer awareness. He deserves to be remembered for who he was and not just as a statistic.

Right now, the federal government is only allocating a mere 4% for federal funding for childhood cancer research. This percentage is far from enough 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 ultimately permit researchers additional funding to potentially find a childhood cancer vaccine to put a stop to such invasive treatments for children fighting cancer and possibly even find a cure so that no child has to live in such pain and agony. We are in need of 12 million signatures to be able 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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