



PETITION TO INCREASE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER RESEARCH

Mason was 8 years old when he started to complain consistently of leg pain. We had thought that it was likely growing pains since his other siblings had experienced similar symptoms around his age, but to be safe we brought him to the doctors to have some x-rays done. What they found was something no parent ever expects. The doctors diagnosed our son with Osteosarcoma. This is a malignant tumor that almost always occurs in a bone, most commonly near the growth plates around the knee, arms, legs and pelvis. It is the most common type of pediatric bone tumor.

We brought him to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia right away. Once there, the doctors wasted no time in figuring out exactly what was going on with

Mason and pinpointing the cancer. Along with the tumor on his femur bone, they also found a concerning spot on his lung. Within two days of being at CHOP, Mason had surgery to remove the cancer from his lung and chemo treatments began soon after. For three months we spent almost every day each week at the hospital for his Chemotherapy. It was extremely difficult watching him go through treatment. The medications they administer are just too much on a small child's body.

During that time, we also had to decide what to do about the tumor on Mason's femur. The doctor's gave us several options and in the end our son decided on the rotationplasty due to the fact that it would give him the best chance of a functioning leg and also less of a chance of the cancer returning. A Van Ness Rotationplasty is a very rare and technically demanding surgery in which a functional amputation is performed when the ankle joint is rotated 180 degrees and reattached to replace the knee joint.

Simple research from the National Cancer Institute on statistical data about childhood cancer, paints a gruesome picture of how childhood cancer is the leading cause of death by disease past infancy among children in the United States. It has been formally estimated in 2022 that over 15,600 children will be diagnosed with childhood cancer, and 1,780 will die of the disease. How can we go on with our daily lives knowing this is the awful truth and not do anything about it?

This battle has been extremely demanding mentally, physically and financially. I have spent so much time in the hospital away from my other three children so I can be there for Mason. He has struggled with the fact that he is different from other kids now that he has a prosthetic. He also lost his hearing due to the chemo and has a hard time with the fact that he has to wear hearing

aids now. I also had to take a leave of absence from my job which cut our income in half and left us with many unknowns from day to day.

One of the many reasons I am so passionate about finding a cure for childhood cancer, is seeing the struggles these children endure. Watching them fight so hard to win their battle and all of the obstacles they face along the way. It is unfair that they have to spend most, if not all of their time fighting instead of doing the things that kids are supposed to do. Once that is over with if they are lucky enough to survive, there is still the possibility of relapse.

Unfortunately for us, that is what happened to Mason. The cancer has come back in his lung and the doctors are saying that it does not look good. He has been entered in a clinical trial. There is nothing else that we can do right now to save our son's life except for hoping and praying that this treatment works. This is why it is so important to sign and share the petition to increase funding for childhood cancer research. With added funding to increase the percentage from 4 to 8, more consistent research will be available to ensure that there are better and more humane treatment options for our children. There would also be more potential to find a cure. Please click the link below and stand with us in the fight to end childhood cancer.

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