



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

Enrique “Ricky” Peverley was only 9 years old when he was diagnosed with Medulloblastoma, after an MRI revealed a large posterior fossa on his brain. It is the most common type of cancerous brain tumor in children. This is a malignant brain tumor that starts in the lower back part of the brain, called the cerebellum. About 500 children in the United States are diagnosed with this type of cancer each year. About 20% of childhood brain tumors are medulloblastoma, making it the most common cancerous brain tumor in children.

Hearing the words cancer when it comes to a loved one is earth shattering, even more so when it is your child receiving the diagnosis. Ricky has been in remission for 4 years now, but it is not without daily struggles. He suffers from multiple medical traumas along with daily anxiety, fearing that his cancer may return. There have been many times where I almost watched my son die because the treatments he was receiving were too much for his tiny body to handle. Chemo and radiation are way too harsh on our children. There needs to

be another way to treat these children, so they can be cured without lifelong side effects due to being subjected to such toxic chemicals.

Studies show that about 10,470 children under the age of 15 will be diagnosed with cancer in 2022. These statistics are for the United States, imagine what they are around the world. Childhood cancer rates have been rising slightly for the past few decades. After accidents, it is the second leading cause of death in children ages 1 to 14. About 1,050 children under the age of 15 are expected to die from cancer this year. Further research explains that brain and spinal cord tumors are the second most common cancer to occur in children. More than 4,000 brain and spinal cord tumors are diagnosed each year in children and teens.

Despite being four years in remission, Ricky suffers life long disabilities from the cancer and treatments that have left his body and mind hobbled. It is hard for him to express how he feels, but at times it is clear to see that he grieves the child he once was and the person he wished to become. He survived his cancer which we are thankful for every day, but it was not without sacrifice. Throughout this process he has lost most of his ability to walk, talk and eat normally. He has lost most of the mobility of the right half of his body and potentially the ability to have children one day. He often talks about how he once dreamed he would grow up to be a pro baseball player and how he would have a wife and children to love and share his life with. Now he believes this to just be a fantasy.

As his mother I try to comfort him by telling him if he works hard he can achieve the ability to play baseball again and maybe even go pro. We try to tell him that somewhere out there, there is someone perfect just waiting for him and the love he has to give. As for children, this is a subject that is much harder to

offer comfort for. We try to be as open as possible when talking about his condition and the side effects of his treatment, which means telling him that he may never be able to have biological children. It is impossible for us to speak to the possibilities of adoption, so we cannot even offer that as comfort. I also grieve for the same things, his past and his future. His battle is far from over. He will have lifelong risks and health issues. I understand some of these are risks we all face, but for my son it is likely that he will have to contend with far more than the average person. I now have to constantly live with the fact that it is highly likely I will watch my first born die despite surviving his initial struggle.

The federal government has allocated a baffling 4% of government funding for cancer research in the United States, which is far from enough. This percentage needs to be increased to a minimum of 8% for proper research. The signing of this petition will facilitate the lobbying and passing of a healthcare policy or law that allocates a higher percentage of national resources to childhood cancer research. We need 12 million signatures to proceed to the next phase of raising the funding percentage. I am willing to do whatever it takes to get there. Please click on the link below to add your signature to the list of supporters.

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