



PETITION TO INCREASE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER RESEARCH

William was an amazing little boy. He was kind and no matter how many hardships he faced, he always maintained a smile. William wanted to be a firefighter when he grew up. But unfortunately he was taken from us way too soon for him to make those dreams a reality. He passed away on March 5, 2018, at only 3 years old.

On February 20, 2017, our lives were altered forever when our youngest son William was diagnosed with Stage 4 Prostatic Embryonal Rhabdomyosarcoma. This is a rare cancer, occurring predominantly in male infants and children. Only about 500 people per year are diagnosed with this aggressive cancer, most of them being adolescents.

From the beginning of Williams' diagnosis to when he passed was excruciating. For a majority of his fight, we had to stay at a hospital in Houston

Texas. The only communication we had with family was through facetime and texting. I was pregnant at the time and gave birth to my daughter during our stay. I struggle with PTSD, anxiety and depression still to this day due to all that my son and my family endured through this process, which unfortunately ended in losing a child.

While glaring statistics from the National Cancer Institute inform us that childhood cancer is the leading cause of death by disease past infancy among children in the United States. This year alone it is estimated that over 15,000 children will be diagnosed with childhood cancer and over 1,700 of those children will die. Signing 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.

William had to be put to sleep every single day for his radiation treatment. I had to hold him in my arms and watch them inject him with anesthesia. I was terrified every time that he may not wake up. He got so sick from the treatments he was given. He had to grow up so fast for a 3 year old boy. It is understandable that chemo and radiation are necessary for survival. But when you find out that the treatment used for your son's specific type of cancer, is the same treatment for bone cancer and is a 35 year old treatment. That is completely unacceptable and inhumane in my opinion.

In January after fighting for almost a year, the doctors told us that Williams tumor had grown in size. This was the cause of several side effects, including William being unable to urinate. They told us that the treatments were no longer working and there was nothing else they were able to do, except send him home with hospice care and make him as comfortable as possible while he passed.

Hearing those words was a punch in the stomach. We were about to lose our 3 year old and there was nothing that could be done to prevent it.

William was in so much pain at the end, that he would pass out. He was unable to walk without a walker, but even that was a struggle for him. On March 1, 2018, William was granted his wish from Make-A-Wish. He got to live out his dream of being a firefighter for a day. He was thrilled and spent his entire day as a firefighter until he was too weak to continue. Four days later our little boy passed away at home surrounded by his family who loved him so much.

By signing this petition, you will not only be increasing awareness over childhood cancer but also pushing for the increased budgetary allocation towards this noble cause and enable researchers to find much better technology in treating children with cancer. In doing so, this intense research will also help to develop childhood cancer vaccines. We need 12 million signatures to ensure effective lobbying to raise the current funds for childhood cancer. But we need all of the help we can acquire in order to do so. Please stand with us to raise childhood cancer research funding from 4% to 8%.

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