

2020 Honorary Co-Chairs

Parker Fenner



Parker's story started in January 2019. My daycare provider would call me at work and let me know that he had a fever. At this point his fevers were only happening about once or twice a month. I would take him in to the first available doctor and was just told that whatever he had was viral and had to run its course. Skip forward to April and Parker was having a fever once a week. No other real symptoms to being sick besides the fever. Once again, we were told that what he had was viral and had to run its course. Unfortunately, his fevers only got worse. By the end of May, Parker was having a fever every day. On May 28th I decided to take him to my PA, Gina Hawkins. I was at the end of my rope with being told that whatever he had was viral. I wanted some tests done and I wanted to know what was wrong with our baby. On a side note, I usually bring Parker to his appointments by myself, but this day I called my husband and asked if he would come with to this one. In hindsight, that was God's way of telling me that we were definitely going to need each other in the next couple of hours. As we say

down in the room with Gina she asked the normal questions, and then some key questions that I knew weren't good. "He looks pale, has he always been that way?" and "Does he always seem to have that many bruises?" She then asked if she could do some blood work. When she left the room I had this sinking feeling in my gut that I wasn't going to like what we found out. About 5 minutes after the nurse came and got his blood Gina walked in with one of the doctors. The sat down and said those words that you never want to hear as a parent. "Unfortunately, we think your son has leukemia. You need to get him to Sioux Falls to the castle, tonight."

He was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia.

We spent the next 10 days in the hospital. We had so many of our family and friends come visit. Parker went through so many test, x-rays, pokes, and meds that week. It's amazing that he still likes the doctor! Those first 6 months we're pretty much hell. Weekly chemo trips to Sioux Falls, PICC line removal, port placement surgery, sleepless nights with nerve pain from the chemo, endless medications to combat all the side effects, hair loss, ROID RAGE, multiple lumbar punctures, quite few ER visits that lead to hospitalization, staph infection, constipation, the list goes on and on!! In the midst of Parker going through all that Josh, his dad, hit a deer, my engine went to crap, and our basement, along with so many others, got flooded with 3 feet of sewage. They say when it rains, it pours. 2019 definitely poured on our Parker. In the midst of this storm that we are facing our families and friends are warming our hearts like the rays of sunshine bursting through the clouds. I honestly don't know where we would be without their love and support.