

2019 Honorary Co-Chairs

Ryker Earl



We had a feeling early that something just wasn't quite right with Ryker. The pregnancy went fantastic. However, at a couple months old we started noticing some issues. His symptoms included extreme eczema and "cradle cap" covering his entire head. Due to this, he lost all his hair and had many restless nights of uncontrollable itching. After trying creams and steroids with no results, we finally caught a break. A doctor from Brookings suggested the possibility of Wiskott-Aldrich Syndrome and recommended Ryker go through genetic testing at Sanford Children's Hospital in Sioux Falls. Ryker's genetic testing was positive for Wiskott-Aldrich. Going through that process was heart breaking, but a blessing to finally have answers. The only cure for this syndrome is a bone marrow transplant. We were referred to University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital. They talked us through everything and did their best to ease the concerns we had.

After finding a donor, Ryker began chemo treatment at ten months old. After fourteen doses of chemo over the course of ten days it was time for his transplant. The first couple weeks were a blur, but it was the official beginning of getting Ryker healthy. We had no idea of what the next eight months had in store. He had two major complications with his transplant. He had developed VOD which is when the transplant causes issues with the liver. The Second complication was TMA which can cause rejection and/or prolong the transplant. The TMA caused fluid to surround his heart preventing them from placing a feeding tube even though he was extremely underweight. But just as something would come up, he would pull through and put any concerns to rest. Staying strong and eventually passing all tests/requirements with flying colors, allowing him to finally come home.

Over all, it was a very nerve wrenching and stressful process. However, we had so much support from our family and friends. There was also support from people whom we had never met. It was amazing to see so many people offering support and praying for all of us to pull through. Currently, Ryker goes in for labs every six months, but he completely off medications. He is now a high energy, amazing, and HEALTHY boy! Besides the scars, you would never know Ryker had gone through so much.