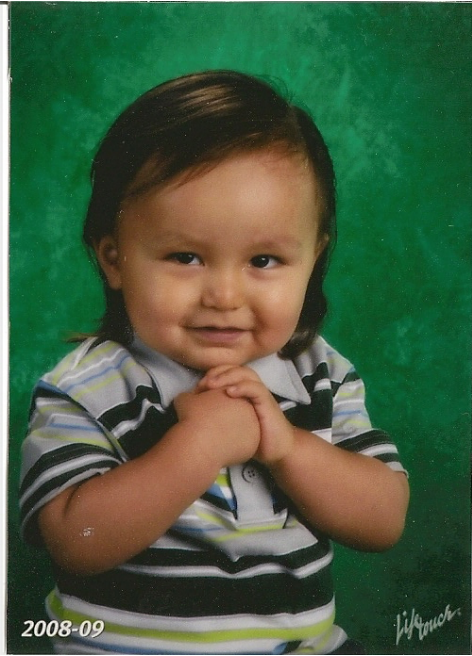
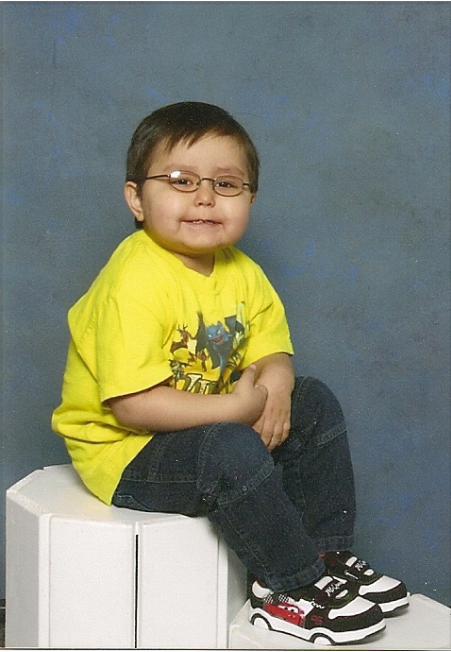


# Xavier Valandra





Xavier is the 4 year old son of Craig Valandra and Deanna Flood. He has a sister Simone who is 11, and a brother, Marquel who is 8. Xavier was diagnosed March 12, 2009, with ALL (Acute Lympho Leukemia) at the age of 2. ALL is cancer of blood cells. It develops in the bone marrow, which is the soft tissue in the center of the bones where blood cells are made. ALL is a cancer in which young abnormal infection fighting white blood cells, called blasts, crowd out the normal bone marrow cells and spread into the blood system. Blasts also spread to the brain, spinal cords, testicles, and organs.

Xavier had been spiking fevers, keeping his parents up all night with crying and saying he had "owies" for several months prior to being diagnosed. They had taken him to the pediatrician several times, only to be told that he was spoiled, teething, or having growing pains. Then one night they decided to take him to the ER as they knew something was wrong with their little boy. They found out the next morning that he had leukemia. At that moment all they could do was cry. For months they had been trying to figure out why he had been telling them something was wrong. They had to get him to Sioux Falls soon, to find out what kind of Leukemia he had. What a horrible experience for a parent, to watch your child be poked, and in pain.

Five months after being diagnosed, he went into remission. Xavier has been having spinal taps every 3 months, and has been on chemotherapy for 2 years now. After one more year of treatment, he will hopefully be done.

Xavier loves to go to The Children's Castle in Sioux Falls. The staff are now friendly faces, and he is not scared to receive treatment. He is a strong and very brave little boy!

This has been hard financially and emotionally for the family. It not only affects Xavier, but his older siblings as well. They have been limited to certain activities because of Xavier's sickness. He can get sick easily if his counts are down, with colds and ear infections. Something like a hangnail could put Xavier in the hospital. He can't go swimming at a public pool, go to daycare, or get to enjoy a park when he wants. Xavier does weekly visits with The Home Base Program through Early Headstart and looks forward to going to school and being able to play with other kids and make new friends.

The family was able to take a trip to Disney World though Make A Wish in April 2010. They had to wait till Xavier's counts were up, and have the doctor's approval. They stayed at "Give Kids the World Village." While there, he got to see many of his favorite characters, as well as The Magic Kingdom, Animal Kingdom, Epcot, MGM Studios, Universal Studios, and Sea World.

The children at Longfellow Elementary did a penny drive for Xavier, and surprised them with a check at the Spring Concert. When the family needed it the most, Heart and Sole Cancer Assistance was there to help. In March of 2011, Xavier and his parents participated in the radio-thon on 104.7 with Mel and Andy. Xavier and his family are very thankful for and truly appreciate all the help that has been given to them by their community and some special people in their lives.