



My son Dakota Breuer was diagnosed in 2008 with Neuroblastoma. He just turned 4 in January and was diagnosed April 24th, 2008. He was a very sick little boy and severely dehydrated, they had to admit him in the hospital, put him on IV fluids and stick a tube down his throat to put contrast into his belly to see what was going on. He wouldn't eat or drink, all he wanted to do is sleep, and there wasn't really any pain, After they did the tube and contrast, they did an x-ray on his belly. My family and I thought it was his appendix but when the doctor said we needed to go to another room to talk I knew it was bad. It's the WORST NEWS a mother could ever get about their child, I was 8 months pregnant with his sister Emma and I couldn't eat or sleep. I was so stressed out and lost for words that I couldn't breathe or even think straight, all I thought about was my child dying and how did he get this horrible C word "CANCER". I stayed up all night just watching him and crying, he was just a baby. We were admitted in Great River Medical Center and waiting to be transported to The University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics (UIHC). That weekend of the 25th we watched him play and be a normal boy for the last time until it came the day of his surgery, which was April 28th, They came and got him at 6 in the morning to start getting him prepped for surgery. About 7:30-8a.m. they started his surgery and he was in there till 4:30-5p.m. The longest day of my life was waiting for my child to come out of surgery. When he came out of surgery, he was admitted to his own room to recover and to get better from the longest surgery of his life. He was in there for 12 days and was released because he had gone into remission after all the tumors and lymph nodes they had removed. He got out on May 8th, 2008. On August 16th, 2008 he had gone back for his first checkup and more tests to make sure the tumors were still gone. Well it wasn't our lucky day, because it had come back worse than what it was before. When he first got it, it was at stage 2, then the 2nd time it had come back, it came back HARD. He had gone into Stage 4B, which is the worst Stage of NEUROBLASTOMA. He had to have another surgery which lasted about 4 to 5 hours and then we talked about treatments. He had to have 6 months of Chemotherapy, which made him very sick, High fevers, Infections, not eating and lots of other things. Then when Chemotherapy was done he had to do a Stem Cell harvest for

his bone marrow transplant and he was in ICU for 3 days, They had to collect over 2 million stem cells so they had enough for his Bone Marrow Transplant, We had a little break after that before his transplant to play with him and go out and do some things but not much because he was so weak and little. It's sad seeing your baby go thru this alone. He had me and his Gma, which is his shining star, but you know it's very hard when his daddy wasn't around and he wanted him there. We got family pictures done before his transplant. He had to have another surgery because we thought he had tumors back, but it was his scar tissue and muscles wrapped together giving him that horrible pain. He also had to have his double lumen put in for his transplant. The day of his transplant was March 16th to April 15th. That whole month was horrible seeing him sick, puking, fevers, bleeding and just wore out from all the crap he had to go thru to save his life. I was there 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. I had so many breakdowns, I thought I was going to lose my baby. They had put oranges all over his room to help absorb the smell from his stem cells, they made it so comfortable for him and his room was amazing the way it was decorated for his transplant. After his transplant was done and he got better, he finally got to go home for a little bit before he started Radiation. He got to go home while I had his new baby sister there so that he could play with her and his other little brother and sister that missed him so much. I finally felt like a family with him being home. When he started Radiation, he had to have 12 treatments, which was over 2 weeks of driving every day to be there at the same time to make sure he got his radiation treatment. He never missed one treatment. The U of I is very good with these children and families. They helped with gas or hotels for all the trips back and forth from Burlington to Iowa City for my son's illness. On July 1st he had to have his last surgery to get his Double Lueman and Port taken out so that he could go to Walt Disney World thru Make-A-Wish Foundation. Finally, the bad journey was over with infections and puking, bleeding and hospital stays. He had between 12 to 24 hospital stays with chemotherapy, surgeries and bone marrow transplant. His last treatment was to take these Acne pills that they also use for Neuroblastoma, which he had to take at 3 in the morning and 3 at night for 6 months. He was in remission starting December 9th of 2009. He had to go for checkups for 3 months to 6 months for his first 5 years, then checkups 1 time a year after that for the rest of his life. So far everything is good. Every time he is sick or just has a cold, he is right at the hospital because I don't take chances with him getting that "C" word back. Now he is 12 years old and is going on 7 years remission on December 9th. He is my soldier and I wouldn't know what to do without him. He is very strong and he loves sports. We love Dance Marathon. We love going to all their events. We walk in the parade for Big Brothers Big Sisters, we go to The Children's Museum, and he gets to go to a lot of basketball and football games with his Big Brother. That was one of his dreams and it came true. I also would love to make him a Kid Captain so he can play with the football players, He already has because of his Big Brother Jon. He is living an amazing life. We finally moved to Iowa City on Christmas Eve of 2014, and I am in the process of buying a house for my children here and also working. He is in 6th Grade and he is a mentor for Mark Twain. He helps little kids and he talks to them about what is going on in school or in Iowa City. He is very popular with all the kids at school, and everyone looks up to him because of what he went thru. I am very blessed to have Dakota in my life and for him to have such good friends and a good support team. Iowa City is the best place for your children, especially

when they are sick. The nurses and doctors are awesome here. They won't give up until they know what is wrong with your child. When my son had got cancer my life had changed a lot. You really don't know how short life is until something tragic happens to a loved one. Always remember to tell them you love them before they leave, or they go to sleep, because you never know what could happen. I have learned life is a "Gift" and "TOMORROW IS NEVER PROMISED." My son is my Guardian Angel and My Role Model. I LOVE YOU DAKOTA BREUER AND I AM SO PROUD OF YOU!!!!

