



Our son, Sebastian was a freshman in HS when he began having some health issues...nothing out of the ordinary of common cold symptoms but he just couldn't get rid of them. It wasn't until he lost over 20 lbs. that we got concerned. After doctor appointments and finally an x-ray we were asked to go to UIHC as he was going to be admitted and put in isolation. Doctors weren't sure what was going on but after 10 days of isolation, many scans, biopsies and tests later the diagnosis was in....on Friday, (March) 13th we were told he had Hodgkins Lymphoma.

As many families know this a blow to your head and your heart. You're scared and unsure as to what the future holds for your child and your entire family. I knew we were fortunate to live so close to the UIHC and I trusted the staff completely. What we didn't know was how many amazing resources are available and offered to families of cancer patients. Dance Marathon provided us w/ information, and also financial help to get us through those first months. Constant and long hospitalizations, driving back and forth, meals, etc. We first learned about Dance Marathon after being sent home initially after his diagnosis. DM provided us w/ basic essentials we would be using daily for my son and his health, such as, sanitizer, a thermometer, gloves, medications, face masks, etc.

Throughout my son's cancer crusade, we became a little more familiar w/ DM. They provided great students/volunteers who were eager to get to know us, help us and just be there to support Sebastian. There were events, free merchandise, goodies, and activities too!

After his stem cell transplant, almost an entire year later of being diagnosed, we were in the first days of his stem cell transplant. This was exciting but there was so much excitement going on the floor and the hospital. Everyone was excited and participating somehow in the "BIG EVENT"....We weren't able to be a part of it because of how Sebastian was responding to his stem cell placement; but we are very excited and eager to be part of our 1st BIG EVENT this year. We have met many students, friends, staff, volunteers through this cancer crusade and Dance Marathon has made a huge impact on that too!

Thank you to all of you who continue to volunteer, donate, fundraise, bring awareness, as quickly learned.....Cancer does not discriminate...one can only make the best of a diagnosis by keeping hope and faith which is what the dancers bring to patients daily and yearly.

On a side note, Sebastian was diagnosed in March 2015, chemo, radiation, major surgery to remove his upper lobe in the summer, relapse in October, stem cell in February 2016, and reached remission in March of 2016. He began a preventative chemo regimen in August of 2016 which he does via infusion outpatient every three week.

Mireles Family