

Cameron's Story

It all started when I was 14 years old with a knot behind my ear that ended up being a swollen lymph node. I noticed it one day when I was laying in bed. After 6 months of going back and forth to the doctor with various symptoms such as: swollen lymph nodes, fatigue, bloody noses, back pain and bruising, I finally collapsed at school and was rushed to the emergency room where they performed the standard chest x-ray. The results were not good. I had a mass of lymph nodes, the size of my hand, in my chest. I was immediately checked into the hospital to be tested and probed so the doctors could try to figure out what was going on. Initially, I was told that the symptoms and preliminary tests indicated that I had Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Several more tests were performed and finally a bone marrow biopsy revealed the shocking results. The Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma was a secondary cancer and the primary cancer was Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia (A.L.L.).

Due to the rareness of the combinations of diseases and the lack of treatment options, I was given 6 months to get into remission before the disease completely took over. The doctor's at Richland Memorial Children's Hospital in Columbia, SC collaborated with several other facilities across the country to try to figure out how they were going to treat this aggressive disease. The conclusion was not good. The only real option I had was to participate in a completely experimental clinical trial that would not be covered by health insurance and that had never been tried before. So that's what I did. I signed the papers, not knowing how my family was going to afford or pay for this treatment protocol that would last for 4 years.

A million dollars and 21 years later, I am cured!

Thank God for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and the American Cancer Society (who together paid for about 80% of the medical bills), the doctors and researchers, and the support from everyone I have met along the way! I am truly blessed!

I am glad to see an organization like WES Foundation focusing and funding innovations in Leukemia research!