

Jonathan's Remission

In the summer of 2005, at the age of 22, while attending college in Georgia, I began experiencing flu-like symptoms. These symptoms of headache, extreme fatigue and swollen lymph nodes persisted for about three weeks until I awoke one morning with a severe pain in my lower left abdomen. I called my parents in another state and asked what to do. My mother suggested that I go to the emergency room of the local hospital. Upon doing so, the doctors there found my white blood count extremely elevated, to about 71,000. Fearful that it may be leukemia, they transferred me to Emory University Hospital in Atlanta where I was subjected to my first of many bone marrow biopsies. That test confirmed that I had Acute Myelogenous Leukemia (AML).

Within two hours of my diagnosis, I began my first round of conventional chemotherapy. Each round would last about 28 days. By Christmas of 2005, I was in remission and remain so today. During my stay in the hospital and my treatment, I was blessed with an amazing support group of friends and family. A staff member from the church I attend came to visit and read a verse from the Bible that has stuck with me. Isaiah 41:10 reads "...fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand". I am now back in school, enjoy riding my bike and going to concerts. I never thought being "normal" could be so rewarding. I now find joy in the small things in life. I continue to embrace my motto each day to "fear not".

Coincidentally, through a mutual friend, I knew Wes but didn't know of the When Everyone Survives Foundation until just recently. Upon reviewing the website and seeing what they were doing, I asked to tell my story. I do so in an effort to give back to those that supported me and to provide hope for those that may find themselves where I found myself in the summer of 2005.

Fear not.

Jonathan