

STORY A

It was a day that I will never forget. March 10th, 2019, the day before my youngest son turned 14. it was a normal Sunday morning, Aiden woke up before everyone else, it was a day he had been waiting for over a year. We made plans to see Captain Marvel for one of his birthday presents. Nothing was going to stop Aiden from seeing this movie. Three weeks earlier I took Aiden to see his doctor. His symptoms were sinus congestion and the feeling of pressure between his ears. Normal flu or cold like symptoms. He was prescribed the usual medication to alleviate the pressure and some saline spray for his nose. A week later I took him back. His symptoms were getting worse and this time Aiden had a beating sound in his ear. Again, dismissed as a cold or flu. Then, on the morning of the movie, Aiden said to me that he had thrown up but was not feeling sick. His vision started to go blurry and I noticed they looked cross-eyed too. His mom urged Aiden to go to the ER, but he insisted that we go after the movie. After the movie he said he was seeing double and so I took him to an optometrist. Aiden went through the routine eye exam. His retinal nerves were swollen, and I was told to take him straight to the ER. We got to the ER and got checked in. The doctors seemed to know what was going on by the symptoms Aiden was having but at this time they weren't really telling me much. Just that he needed to have an MRI and CT scan. When the doctor came back with the results of the scans, I was not expecting to hear that Aiden had a tumor on his brain. Everything Aiden was going through for the last three weeks pointed to all the symptoms of having brain tumor. The feeling of pressure in the head, vomiting and double vision were signs the doctors had previously missed. Aiden was moved to a room at the pediatrics unit and was prepped for surgery for the next day, which was his birthday. This was the scariest and hardest day of my life. It was the uncertainty of everything. Not knowing what to expect while trying to keep it together in front of Aiden. His mom and I were struggling to not break down and just trying to get his mind off what was about to happen. we told each other jokes and funny stories, and then it was time. We hugged and then he looked at both of us and asked, "are you guys going to be ok"? here he is, about to have brain surgery and he asked if we were ok. That is just the kind of kid he is. Very thoughtful and compassionate and that is what made it even more difficult. We sat in the waiting room for what seemed like days. It was me and his mom, his three older brothers, his uncle, cousin and grandma all waited for the surgeon to come out with the results. Finally, she gave us the news. It was a germinoma tumor. The tumor on his brain was blocking the spinal fluid causing the pressure and she was able to re-route it. Everything looked very promising. We spent the next few weeks in and out of doctor appointments and having a plan for the chemotherapy. Aiden would have to do six months of chemo and six weeks of radiation. Aiden has had a very positive attitude and sometimes humorous outlook throughout this whole process. I think his sense of humor really played a part of his recovery. What I have taken from this experience is to live life to the fullest because you never know what life will throw at you. I'm so thank full for the team at providence and my family and friends that have helped us along the way.



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