

## Trenton's Story

In January 2008, just before Trenton's 2nd birthday, we noticed a flicker in his eye. Our family doctor suggested we see an ophthalmologist, who would have known how our world was about to change. The ophthalmologist suggested an MRI to confirm Trenton's eye flickering was nothing more than a common childhood problem. On May 31, 2008 a neurosurgeon would break our hearts and tear our world into two telling us what the MRI images found. Trenton was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor, a juvenile pilocytic astrocytoma. The day, the images, the pain will forever be burned into my memory, how can this be, our world was shattered.

Deep breathe! God grant me the courage and strength to pull myself together and be the Mom that my child needs right now! Two days of tears and a pity party for me, and that was it, off I went on a mission to save my son. 44 months have passed since that day, 39 months of chemotherapy, 5 surgeries that would take us to hell and back, more hospital stays and days in clinic than I care to recount, 4 birthdays, and lots of tears and laughter here I am. I am one of the lucky ones; I am a mother whose child is still here to battle.

Today we still fight the good fight and Trenton is still on treatment at this time. As we are about to gather for Trenton's Sixth Birthday this week I am overwhelmed with joy for having the time I have had with this wonderful child. As I look back and realize that Trenton has spent the last four years fighting for each and every day he is given, I remember to be thankful for that time. Four years is a long time to fight, but to be given the opportunity to do so is a blessing that often is overlooked. I remember how two years ago I celebrated Trenton's 4th birthday in a clinic room while he received his chemo still unable to walk and barely talk from a surgical procedure. Many days have passed since then, some days that I thought we would never make it through, yet here we are about to celebrate his 6th birthday. This time it will be making pizzas and decorating cupcakes for his friends to come and enjoy with us, a long way we have come. I am tearful just thinking how much he has accomplished in the last two years and overall in this child's six short years here. It is inspiring to see how he keeps fighting everyday and how thankful he is for so many little things that most of us take for granted. As I have seen many children pass from this horrible disease over the last four years it reminds me of how truly precious each day is. Trenton seems to be wise beyond his years in recognizing that. He chooses to take the time each day to make others smile and enjoy all that the day gives him, a reminder we all need from time to time.

Trenton will continue on this experimental drug that was given to him in October as a last effort for "compassionate reasons". Three months ago I prayed for him to see Christmas, little did I think he would see his 6th birthday. But here we are, and with his strength and determination there may be no end to all the days we will see with this wonderful little boy. This is one of those stories that gives hope to so many that there may be that one drug that works. The MRI in January showed he is stable and the drug is working. It truly is a reminder that there is always Hope, something we all need from time, children especially; there are always Smiles, you just need to find them; and there will always be Love, you just need to give it.