

Parker's Story- Through his Mother's Eyes!

This month's newsletter is about the journey of a 2 year old little boy's battle with Retinoblastoma Cancer - Eye Cancer.

Keep Reading! It has a good ending!!



Parker!

Hi! My name is Annette Fisher and I am the Mission Coordinator here at LifeLine Pilots. I was first contacted by Megan, Parker's Mother, in February of this year (2017). They needed a flight from Michigan to Philadelphia to see an eye specialist at Wills Eye Institute for treatment of their son's eye cancer. Angel Flight East was originally contacted but referred them to us since they live in Michigan with a promise to help LifeLine Pilots get them to Philadelphia!

Parker's first flight with LifeLine Pilot, Alan P., was on February 21st. Alan volunteered to take both legs and fly them all the way to Philadelphia.

His second flight was with Angel Flight East pilot, John T., who volunteered to take both legs to get them back home! In April, Parker had another flight to Philadelphia and back with LifeLine Pilots and Angel Flight East. After this trip Megan shared Parker's story in hopes that more parents have their children's eyes checked by an Eye Doctor.

Here is Parker's Story told by his Mother, Megan

So.. here this goes. I didn't want to write this. I didn't want to believe it, or to even accept it. I don't really know why I was against telling anyone what was going on, besides maybe it makes it seem a bit more real...

something I don't want it to be.

Even if you don't read this post word for word, please at least read the last

paragraph. Mother to mother. Parent to parent. The last paragraph is the most important. Share this post if you have too.

My son, my perfect little baby, my very true love has become very sick.

For those of you who don't know him, the only thing I can say is that this kid is a total riot. Our little minion is what we call him. He's a wild child; a little boy who loves to play in his sand box and watch the movie "Home" five billion times in a row. He's also quite the dancer; he really loves shaking that little booty of his. And he has cancer.

Cancer. Cancer. No matter how many times I say it, I just can't even wrap my brain around it.

This has all happened so very fast. Last week, we were running around and playing, going on without a care in the world. This week, he has Retinoblastoma, and one less eye.

And now I don't even know what else to say.

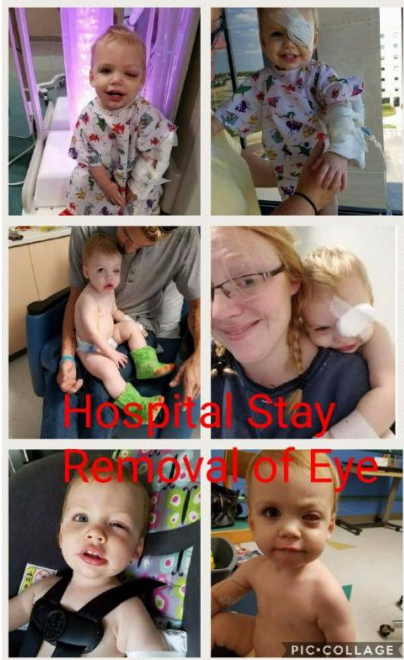
I did it. There. It's out there. You all know.



Day 1



This journey is not over for Parker. They removed the cancerous eye, but there is another tumor behind his other eye. The good news is that the tumor is small and treatable. The bad news is that we are still waiting to find out if the cancer escaped his left eye before we could have the tumor removed.



If there is anything any of you should know, is that his case is unique. The cancer presented itself in a way that is not usual for Retinoblastoma. Not only is it unique, but it was fast. I'll add some pictures to this post. Pictures I don't want to add. Pictures that made my entire world turn upside down.

If there is anything I can press upon you- on all of you mothers and fathers with little babies that you love dearly, it is this. Get your children's eyes checked.

This is not something anyone would have noticed during a wellness check. Parker was 18 months on the 23, and was seen a few days later by his doctor for his 18 month check. They checked to see if his eyes follow the light, and they did. Perfectly. A week later I found out he had cancer.

Please, all of you parents out there, request an eye check. A thorough check. Go to an eye doctor. It's too late for my babies eye... but it's not too late for yours.

If this post has left you any sort of impression, please get your babies eyes thoroughly examined. These pictures I've posted are within days of each other.

Four to be exact. A week later, he lost his eye.

Please don't let this happen to you.

-This post was made in September.

His eye was a little red on August 31st. On September 2nd, his eye was swollen to the size of a golf ball and we went to the emergency room. September 7th is when his eye was removed. He had systematic chemo once a month until December.



Every month of watching the poor little guy lose weight, get sick, and spend his time isolated and alone. No contact with his friends from daycare, or his cousins he had been playing with almost every day of his short little life. It was heartbreaking, but it we thought it was worth it. It wasn't. Two days before Christmas we had devastating news-- the treatments weren't working. Not only were they not working, but the tumor was getting worse.

It had gotten bigger.

Our doctors at Detroit Children's hospital told us the news. They warned us that we had two choices, and neither of them were great. We could either try radiation here in Michigan, which in all likeliness would destroy what vision he had left in his right eye, or we could try a different sort of chemo called intra arterial

chemotherapy. The problem with that is that the only doctor they trusted us to see was located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A 10 hour car drive away from our home. We chose Philadelphia. Anything to save his sight. We drove the first time.

It was miserable. Between an agitated toddler, and his pregnant mother, the 10 hour's drive was just too much.

The news out there was bad too. Not only had the tumor grown, but it has also spread. There were seeds, and another tumor. Fortunately for us there was hope.

Dr. Shields was sure she would be able to save his vision.

While we were out there we were told about LifeLine Pilots. I didn't apply right away. I wasn't in a very strong place. I assumed that like everything else, it would be a fight to get. I was wrong. When finally reached out for help, months after his diagnosis, I was in for a pleasant surprise. Between the Ronald McDonald Charities, and the LifeLine Pilots, we have been truly blessed with good people in this world.

Had we not gotten help from these charities, we would not have been able to afford to get Parker his treatments. We would have stayed in Detroit Michigan where the radiation would have killed the remaining vision he had, and he would be blind. Instead, I have a little boy whose favorite color is apparently purple, and his favorite thing to do is to pick those "flower pretty yellow" in my yard. I've been given so many dandelions I've lost count. Instead, we have a two year old who already knows what some of his letters look like, and can pick out one to five out of a line up.

Three treatments later and his treatment has done more than the five months of systematic chemo had done. After just three months, both tumors had died, and the seeds had disappeared.



Thank you so much to all the pilots from LifeLine Pilots & Angel Flight East! Without everyone who gave us this opportunity, my son might have a very different story.

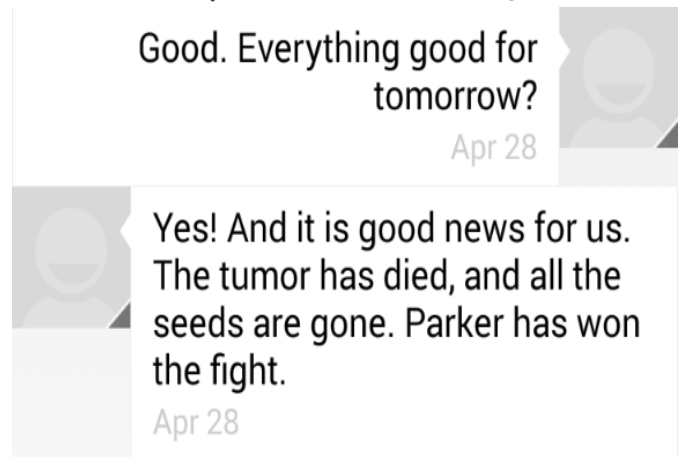
Last week was his last treatment, and hopefully this nasty tumor stays gone and we never have to worry about it again. Of course, there's always the possibility of this

cancer coming back, but until then, here is where our story ends.

Megan

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On Friday Evening, April 28th,  
I texted Megan to make sure everything was set for their flight home to Michigan from Philadelphia the next day...Her answer was ....



I was in a room full of people with tears running down my face while we were texting back and forth. Once I had explained to everyone what was going on they were all crying along with me! Happy Tears!!  
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I can confirm that as of July 19th, 2017, Parker's cancer has not returned and his vision in his remaining eye is perfect! They do not have to travel back to Philadelphia for another 6 months!



Way to go Parker!

See...I told you it had a good ending!!
Thank you for reading Parker's Story!

Shoot! I am out of Kleenex....



Save The Date!

We had such a good turn out the first time we have been asked to come back again! Flat Top Grill is sponsoring another fundraiser at their restaurant in Peoria, IL, on Tuesday, October 24th. They will donate 10% of all food sales to LifeLine Pilots on this day plus we will have raffles! Check out our Facebook page for more information as we get closer.

www.facebook.com/lifelinepilotsusa

Pilots Needed!

Do you know a pilot who would be interested in volunteering? We are always looking for more volunteers! Please send them our way!

Phone: 800-822-7972 email: missions@lifelinepilots.org or complete the pilot application on our website at www.lifelinepilots.org



LifeLine Pilots is made possible by generous contributions.

No amount is too small!

Your donation of \$300 helps facilitate a single mission for a person in need. \$1,500 would facilitate 5 missions, and \$3,000 facilitates 10 missions or set up a monthly donation of \$20!

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