

To Whom It May Concern,

When our baby was almost two, we were told he had cancer of the blood, ALL leukemia. In addition to Parker, we had two other young boys Dylan, 8 and Dakota, 5. Our family lived over 3 hours away from treatment and had to drive every few days, back and forth, six hours round trip. Parker required 3 years of chemotherapy and then when he was 5, he relapsed and had another 3 years of treatment. Needless to say, we barely survived those difficult years of chemicals, blood transfusions, life threatening moments, and time away from each other as a family unit.

Even though we were in survival mode most of the time, we can truly say that within the childhood cancer journey, we had many chances to thrive. American Childhood Cancer Organization Inland Northwest gave our family opportunities for growth and helped us to progress from barely “surviving” into moments of thriving. This amazing organization empowered our family to stay connected, nurtured us physically and mentally, and offered opportunities for our children to have light in their eyes. Most of our favorite hospital memories come from activities and programs offered from ACCOIN. Once a month, massages and delicious food was available for the children with cancer and their families at the hospital. Every time Parker and I traveled to Spokane for chemo, he would ask if there was going to be massages that day.

Parker and thousands of childhood cancer patients receive painful shots on a regular basis Every time a child gets a shot; they also get a “pokey prize”. A “pokey prize” is chosen from a treasure chest full of toys for all ages and is available for children who have had a painful experience or are just in need of a “pick me up”. This treasure chest gives the children a sense of control over their environment and brightens their day. In order to bring awareness to all the gifts ACCOIN has given our family, I would have to write a novel. One of the immeasurable experiences I’ve had as a mother with a child fighting cancer is the priceless gift of meeting Mary Anne, the Director of ACCOIN. Mary Anne is forever in our family’s hearts and gratitude. Periodically, I would stop into her office as she helped me process all the horrific experiences we would watch Parker go through. To this day, I believe ACCOIN helped save me from a mental, physical, and emotional downward spiral. When you nurture the whole family as they too become sick, you impact the child with cancer in powerful ways.

In addition to the inpatient hospital programs, families get the chance to be around other families with a child with cancer. ACCOIN offers support groups, Christmas and Summer parties, and networking opportunities on a regular basis. And financially, the gas cards helped the burden of further debt since we lived so far away, which helped our stress load immensely. Our family is grateful to ACCOIN and to all the organizations and people who support them. Our son Parker died three years ago at the age of 8 years old and we are forever thankful for every single memory that ACCOIN has provided for our family. We only have 8 years of memories to last us the rest of our lives. You support blesses lives, one little bald kid at a time.

From the entire Brown Family,

Sarah Brown