



cure
CHILDHOOD CANCER



Wilhelmina

Wilhelmina had always been strong, independent and a pretty healthy girl. She loves people, to learn and to create. On October 18, 2019, Amanda, Wilhelmina's mother, received a call at work (Jack Cooper/Kennesaw office) that Wilhelmina had fallen on the playground at school and could not put pressure on her left leg anymore.

Amanda carried her into the CHOA urgent care close to their home. An x-ray showed a rectangular image in her left tibia. She was diagnosed with a benign ABC, or Aneurysm Bone Cyst. She got a full leg cast, crutches and a wheelchair. She would need a bone graft to repair it. On November 22, 2019, Wilhelmina had the bone graft and a routine biopsy. That biopsy led to the word cancer, osteosarcoma, and she would need chemotherapy and an amputation. The family waited over the weekend for confirmation. It was confirmed on November 25, three days before Thanksgiving, that Wilhelmina had cancer. She was exactly 7 ½ years old that day.

After a CT scan and a full body PET scan, the family found out that thankfully, the cancer had not spread. Wilhelmina received her port and began chemotherapy on December 9. After six rounds of chemotherapy, Wilhelmina had surgery.

Wilhelmina had two painful and invasive limb salvage surgeries to remove the tumor and save her leg. However, a residual tumor was later found, and she had to have a lower leg amputation. The three weeks spent in the hospital were anguishing and grueling for the family. Wilhelmina came home on March 15 - the day before lockdown began for COVID-19. Now that COVID-19 was in full force, it created another layer of worry and separation for our entire family that continues today.

She received twelve more rounds of chemo after surgery which would cause her many surgical wounds to regress and heal over the rest of her treatment. These were long and trying months that included an infection and hospital stay over Easter, mouth sores and so much medication, yet, doing her own wound care like a pro.

Wilhelmina finished her last round of chemo her first week of 3rd grade. She rang the bell on August 7, 2020.

Wilhelmina has had to grapple with death, fear, anxiety, separation, pain, hair loss, sickness and becoming an amputee. She has done so with a fortitude beyond words. She will be monitored for years to decades to come for chemo related health issues and for recurrence.

Wilhelmina started virtual school two days after coming home from the hospital and her last chemo treatment. She is working hard enjoying learning and creating. During the summer, the family had fun with lots of art, baking and cooking.

In September of 2020, Wilhelmina's wounds healed enough that she could begin walking on a prosthetic. Intense physical therapy has helped her relearn to walk and she is currently working on relearning to run.

The family looks forward to Wilhelmina seeing friends from afar and online but even more so in person - to laugh, to run, to live a full life.

Help further the mission of conquering childhood cancer while supporting patients and their families by donating to:

Cure Childhood Cancer
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