

NICHOLAS

Giving Others Hope

On April 19, 2003, Nicholas was born with a ruptured "hemangioma" on his back just above his spine. We couldn't hold him because the bleeding wouldn't stop. He had surgery and a blood transfusion when he was just 17 hours old.

Three days later, we brought him home from the NICU and introduced him to his sister, Camille, and brother, Max.

After another three days, we returned to the hospital for a follow-up appointment with the surgeon. The surgeon gave us the terrible news that Nicholas did not have a hemangioma. The biopsy showed he had

a malignant tumor. I think she suspected this all along, but I am thankful that we had six days before we were faced with this unimaginable situation. The pathology report also showed that Nicholas still had cancerous cells on his back. We did not go home that Friday afternoon. We were immediately admitted to the hospital. Nicholas endured two more surger-



ies to get a clean resection of the tumor. Numerous tests and procedures followed over the next week as we learned more and more about his rare cancer called a Malignant Rhabdoid Tumor, originally diagnosed as an undifferentiated sarcoma.

Nine months of chemotherapy began when he was 16 days old. He received aggressive doses of Vincristine, Actinomycin, Cyclophosphamide, Cisplatin, Doxorubicin, Intrathecal Methotrexate, Ifosfamide, and Etoposide. The intrathecal methotrexate doses were included because of the tumor's proximity to his spine and the risk of brain metastases. The last dose of Cisplatin was dropped because an ABR showed that Nicholas had suffered some hearing loss. Radiation and Stem Cell Transplant were discussed but ruled out due to Nicholas' young age, the unusual presentation of his tumor, and the fact that the tumor was completely resected.

We monitored every dose of medication closely. He received 10-12 hours of TPN each night to help him maintain his weight. He continued to breastfeed, but it was difficult at times. The chemotherapy treatments caused him a lot of abdominal pain and nausea so we did our best to figure out what he needed which was difficult because he was a baby. We isolated him for nine months in order to keep him healthy. He was hospitalized after nearly every treatment with low white blood cell counts and required many blood and platelet transfusions, but he only had one cold and no infections during the whole process. Amazingly, Nicholas had a great disposition for most of the treatment.

Maintaining Nicholas' health and our sanity was possible with the amazing help and prayers we received from friends and family. Dr. Johnston spent countless hours answering our questions and listening patiently to our concerns. Nicholas' Great Aunt Martha moved to Boise from Alabama to help care for our family. Friends brought meals four nights a week for 10 months, built a playhouse for the kids, and helped chauffeur Camille and Max to and from school and activities.

We thank God every day that we have Nicholas in our lives.

McKayla Keelan

A True Fighter

McKayla is 2 years old and is beating a rare form of cancer called Malignant Rhabdoid Tumor of the Kidney. She finished treatment in Jan 2008!

Check out the journal for the latest news, photos for recent pictures, and links for other information. Please sign the guestbook letting us know you've been here.

McKayla Lynne Keelan was diagnosed with Malignant Rhab-

doid Tumor of the Kidney on April 10th, 2007 after a visit to the ER on March 31st. She went through intense Chemo and Radiation treatments to beat this rare form of cancer and is now cancer free!

Krissy noticed blood in McKayla's diaper on Saturday March 31st and took her to urgent care in Salem. They sent her home finding nothing wrong except

blood in her urine. All other tests came back normal. For 6-7 hours McKayla was screaming non-stop in pain. Krissy then drove her to the Salem ER. They were going to send us home as well, but mommy's instincts said something was definitely wrong and she was not going home until they did something. Finally they did an ultrasound of her bladder and kidneys after feeling something strange in her tummy. That is when they saw the "mass" on her left kidney which turned out to be a 13 cm wide tumor that

had ruptured.

She was rushed to OHSU/Doernbecher Children's Hospital in Portland. They suspected Wilms tumor.

After removing the tumor on April 3rd and further testing they found she had 3 small tumors in her lungs and one on her right knee, as well as cancer cells in her lymph nodes and other abdominal areas.

On April 10th McKayla was diagnosed with MRT, Malignant Rhabdoid Tumor of the Kidney stage IV.

