

# On The Cover



*Taylor  
Ashlyn*

***Taylor Ashlyn Peterson was born on June 7th, 2005. Her dad (Gavin), brother (Tanner), and I (Brandy) were happier than we had ever been.***

At birth, Tay had a small lump in the middle of her chest. The doctor told us that it was a piece of cartilage. We nick-named her “Lumpy.”

By the time Taylor was three weeks old, the “little lump” had grown. We went to see our surgeon, and were scheduled for surgery the next week. We had still never heard the word cancer from anyone, and it was the farthest thing from my mind. It just really never occurred to me that babies could get tumors.

We had four weeks of normal, happy life with Tay and it was wonderful. She loved to snuggle with her daddy and brother, loved it when we talked to her, loved to eat (we started calling her our piggy-girl). She loved everything.

“Normal, happy” life seems pretty spectacular, looking back. By the

time we went in for surgery, the lump was most of the way across

**Taylor with big Brother Tanner**



*Some people come into our lives and quickly go  
Some people move our souls to dance  
They awaken us to new understanding  
With the passing whisper of their wisdom  
Some people make the sky more beautiful to gaze upon  
They stay in our lives for a while*

her chest. The surgery lasted about an hour. The surgeon came out and told us that by looking at the lump he could tell

that it was malignant.

After that, a nurse took me, Gavin, and Taylor up to the Pediatric Oncology Ward. It's so strange to look back on that time; I didn't even know what the word “Oncology” meant. We met our oncologist,

Dr. Reynolds. Taylor had severe breathing problems (due to medications used during the surgery) that landed us in Pediatric ICU for two days, and then we were sent home to wait for the test results telling us exactly which type of cancer our baby

giving us all the horrible statistics that go along with it – no good treatment protocol, a survival rate so small that at first I thought he was lying, and a graphic description of exactly how much worse the out look would be if the tumor had been located in a major organ like the brain or the kidneys. He told me that we were lucky. It's crazy; the forms that “luck” can take.

Tay went in for her second surgery to have a central I.V. line placed. We started her first protocol of chemotherapy the next morning. She would receive one dose of chemo every week.

Three weeks later, we found a new lump at the original site. Dr. Reynolds told us that it was a recurrence, and left us with little hope for getting to keep our girl.

The new lump was removed, and we started a new Chemotherapy protocol. We would be in the hospital for five days out of every month. Also, we would be at the clinic numerous times per week for other treatments and check-ups.

There is so much that I want to say about Taylor. She was so happy. Even on a bad day, she was always smiling and laughing. She

worshipped her big brother, loved to watch him play video games, or have him sing to her. She snuggled with her

*“Normal, happy life seems pretty spectacular, looking back. By the time we went in for surgery, the lump was most of the way across her chest.”*

daddy in the mornings, was obsessed with his gas station coffee cups, and loved chewing on his necklace. She loved bath time with me, or sitting on the floor playing games. Each family member had their own special thing with her: popsicles with my sister, sneaking sweets with my grandpa, reading books with my aunt, playing with my mom's glasses, playing for hours at my in-laws house, or looking at their flower pots. She learned to walk at seven months old, never learned to crawl, said a few single words at such an early age that people thought I was a liar (her first word was "good"). She liked to chew on the T.V. remote, and was obsessed with looking at herself in the mirror. She used to peek around the corner of things and hiss at people. She fell madly in love with Dr. Reynolds, and made the nurses at the hospital her second family. She had a little pink car and we

the hospital. She opened her Christmas presents right along with her brother.

During our five day chemo in February, she got really fussy. This continued off and

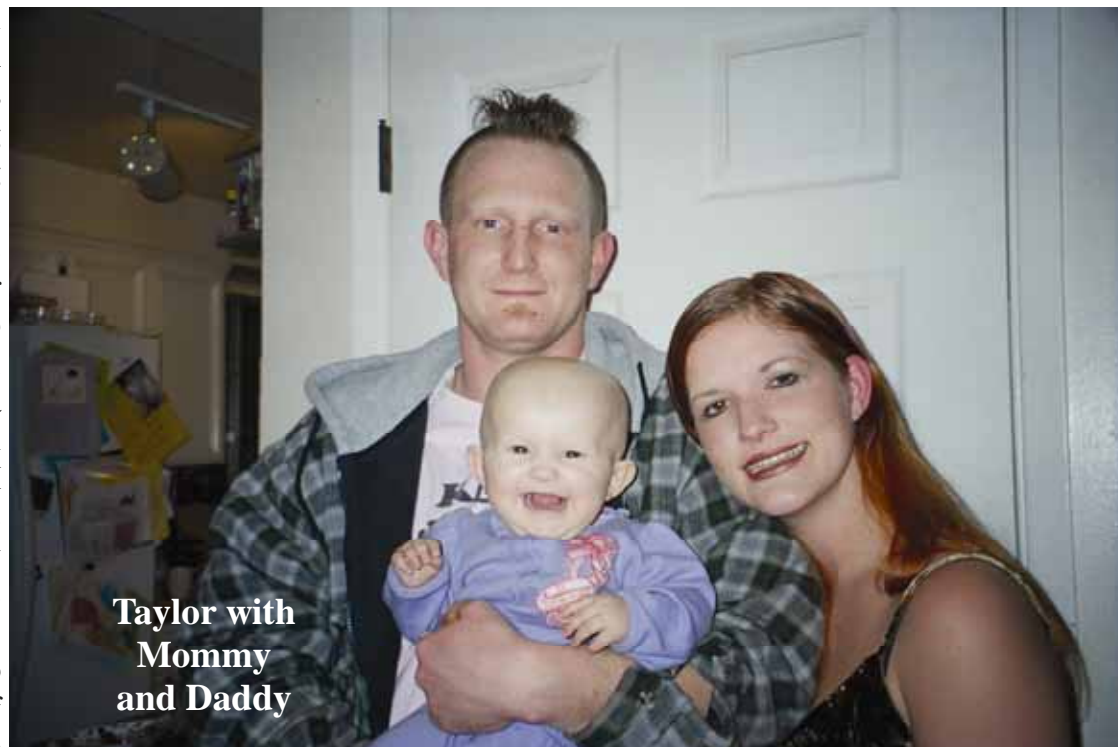
the tests to come back, Taylor was miserable, but still her incredibly resilient self. She rode around in her little pink car a few times, read books, played with a Little People bus. I could care-

chest tubes to drain the fluid. We were there for five days. They kept having to up her dose of pain medication, eventually giving her doses equal to what a child weighing sixty pounds should receive. Nevertheless, she peeked at us a few times, precious moments that I am so thankful for. We talked to her constantly.

By the fifth day, we knew it was time to turn off the ventilator. Tanner came up earlier that day to say goodbye, he painted pictures for Taylor and told her how much he loved her. Later, Gavin, my sister, my mom, my aunt, Gavin's mom, and I were in the room when we turned off the machines. Gavin and I held her, and we all talked to her; about how much our time

with her meant to us, how she was the most wonderful person we had ever known, how much we love her.

I miss Taylor every second of every day. I would give anything to have her back, and know that we are all so incredibly blessed to have had her as a part of our lives.



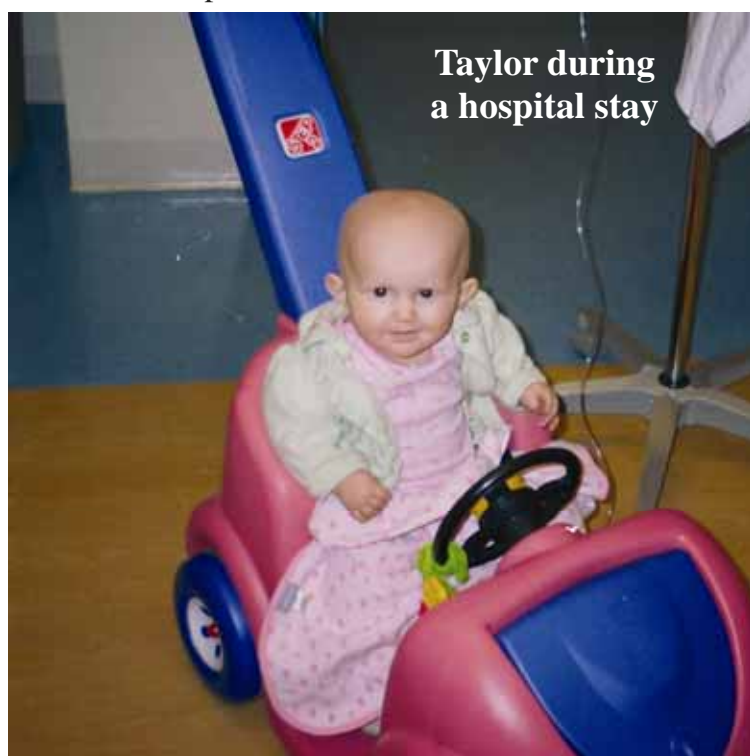
**Taylor with Mommy and Daddy**

on. On March 30th we went in for what was supposed to be our last chemotherapy treatment ever. It was so unusual for Tay

to be upset; Dr. Reynolds wanted to run some tests. We had a CT scan, a bone scan, and surgery again to remove and test a small lump on her collar bone. It was April 3rd. Dr. Reynolds told us he was very sad and very tired, told us that Taylor's cancer was

fully pick her up and softly bounce her against my chest, she really liked that. Tanner came up to the hospital, talked to her, and made her laugh. She had this one orange and red smiley face flower that she loved. On that day before Dr. Reynolds came in, Gavin got it out and started playing with Tay. And she smiled at him. It was her last smile, and I am so glad that she gave it to him. She ate a baby cookie voraciously, loving every second of it.

The next morning, the pressure of the fluid around her lungs caused her to have lung failure. She couldn't breathe. I grabbed Taylor, Gavin grabbed the oxygen tank, and we ran with Dr. Reynolds to Pediatric ICU. She was intubated, and they placed



**Taylor during a hospital stay**

would push her around in it constantly. She also loved strolling around our house in her walker, or trying to sneak into the nurses' station when we were at

back (in the form of fluid filling up her chest and stomach cavity), told us that there was no hope.

During those days waiting for