

Rebecca Piro's Story



Prior to her diagnosis, Rebecca was an active, fun loving 6 year old who loved to dance, played soccer, and excelled in school. Our lives changed forever on Monday, August 13th, when we took Rebecca to the pediatrician after she complained of some discomfort on her left side and we saw blood in her urine before bed the night before.

Our pediatrician sent us to Hunterdon Medical Center for an ultrasound for an abdominal mass. Once finished, they told us to go directly back to the pediatrician's office. Our pediatrician took us aside and told us what was found and what he believed the diagnosis to be – cancer, specifically Wilms Tumor which occurs in the kidneys. We came home, packed and immediately drove to Goryeb Children's Hospital at Morristown Medical Center.

The following day Rebecca had another ultrasound and a CT scan. The scan revealed that there were also nodules on her lungs, meaning it was stage IV, but only one kidney was affected. The typical course of treatment would be to remove the tumor and kidney immediately, but due to the size of the tumor being approximately as large as two grapefruits, that was not an option.

After 6 weeks of treatment with 3 different chemotherapy drugs, Rebecca was ready for her next evaluation. She had another CT scan and the results had been

positive. The main tumor shrunk significantly, but there were still several spots on her lungs. This meant she was ready for surgery, but would also need radiation therapy for the lungs and the treatment would be stretched out an additional 4 weeks due to needing to add 2 additional chemotherapy drugs. During this time of evaluation we also got a second opinion for Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania, and they were in agreement with the treatment plan.

On October 10th, Rebecca underwent her second surgery, this a major one to remove the tumor, kidney and impacted lymph nodes. Other than some additional bleeding, the surgery was successful and the surgeons were able to confirm that they were able to get everything they needed to. She was released from the hospital 6 days later.

Following the surgery, Rebecca had 6 days at home before she would begin the most aggressive part of her treatment. On 10/22 she began her first of 4 weeks of inpatient chemotherapy along with the first 4 radiation treatments. This was a very difficult time due to her still recovering from surgery and due to her age, required to be sedated for every radiation treatment. She was only home for 7 nights from the 4 weeks following surgery and it was definitely a trying time for the whole family.

She had 1 more outpatient chemotherapy treatment before going back into the hospital for her second inpatient week. Following that, several blood transfusions and one more outpatient treatment, Rebecca completed the hardest 6 weeks of her life.

Despite countless trips from Flemington to Morristown and back, surgeries, nights in the hospital and treatments, Rebecca has been a trooper. Her bravery, along with the support of our great community are what help is to get through this extremely difficult time.

