

2012 Swim-a-thon Honored Hero



Julianna Nicholson



On April 4, 2011, Julianna, who was 5 years old at the time, was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia or ALL.

Julianna is a spunky little girl with an imagination as big as the sky and a personality bursting with energy! Her creativity is brought to life through her artwork — coloring, drawing, painting and crafting in a multitude of ways. She also has a strong love and interest in nature; often commenting on how a tree or some flowers or whatever she happens to catch a glimpse of while outside is “so beautiful.” Julianna’s kindhearted nature can be seen while she is caring for all her animal friends in her Littlest Pet Shop village — an activity she enjoys passionately.

If you were to ask Julianna what she would like to be when she grows up, she would quickly respond with not one but two things. The first would be a paleontologist, so that she can continue studying her favorite “science” — the Prehistoric Age. And the second would be a doctor, so that she could find a cure for cancer and help people.

It was a warm, sunny day in April when Julianna’s family found out the cause of her recent tummy troubles. In early March, Julianna fought through a stubborn case of Influenza A. Her high fever and symptoms persisted for a little over two weeks. She was finally getting over the flu when her tummy started to give her major trouble. She couldn’t hold anything down and over then next two weeks things got worse. Then her legs started to really ache and she got tired, very, very tired. Her parents knew that this was no longer just an ordinary case of the flu — something else was drastically wrong.



Julianna’s pediatrician immediately ordered lab work and the results were alarming. The family was sent to Inova Fairfax Hospital for Children and Julianna was admitted that very evening. There, they were placed under the watchful care of Dr. Eva Perdahl-Wallace. After more blood tests and a bone marrow aspirate, the family received the conclusive news that leukemia was to blame.

Julianna is a very strong little girl on her own, but the love and outpouring of support from her friends and family has allowed her to so far persevere through this battle. **But it’s the incredible advancements in the treatment of leukemia that have given her the most important gift — hope!** Though the road ahead for her is long and hard, Julianna’s prognosis is bright.

Julianna, age 6, is the daughter of Lori and Paul Nicholson. She just finished first grade at The Merit School of Prince William and the family resides in Woodbridge, VA.



Share Julianna’s story with your family and friends during your fundraising efforts. Help them connect with our mission, patient lives, and show compassion for those in need.