

Meet Nikos: Our January Honored Hero

Nikos was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia on May 15, 2004. He had stayed at a friend's house the night before -- she is a recovery nurse - - and when she brought him home on that Saturday morning she noted that his stomach looked abnormally swollen. So I took him to see Dr. Zoucha that morning -- Sara (Nikos's mother) was on call -- and Dr. Zoucha examined Nikos for a couple of minutes and then said "I think it's cancer."

He immediately sent us to Mary Lanning Hospital to see the radiologist. The tests confirmed Dr. Zoucha's suspicion and we were soon on our way to Children's Hospital in Omaha.

Under the direction of Dr. Abromowich, Nikos began his three year and two month road of treatment.

His program of treatment involved Nikos taking a daily chemo orally. In addition, he took steroids for one week per month and had multiple rounds of intense steroid treatment. Nikos was so young when he got diagnosed, that he didn't even know how to swallow pills yet. The Theoharis family had to teach him to swallow his daily chemotherapy pills by practicing first with mini M&Ms. Once he could swallow those, he could take his chemo every day. When it came to him being on steroids, his whole eating routine was changed. Nikos's father, Pete, has said that the steroids would make him really hungry, and there would be nights that Nikos would wander into his parents' bedroom at 2 or 3 in the morning and ask them if he could have a sandwich.

He was twice isolated because of low counts and lost his hair. He had to be admitted twice at Mary Lanning for blood transfusions. In addition, he had 30+ spinal taps and had a port installed for easy access.

His treatment ended on July 13, 2007, and he is currently in middle school in Hastings, NE.



Nikos: Hastings, NE