

## Merry Massey Christmas



On September 5, 2024 our 14 year old daughter's life changed forever. Matney had attended 8 days of her freshman year of highschool in our small town of Marshfield, Missouri and then our family headed to the lake for Labor Day weekend after Matney danced with her highschool dance team at the first home football game. Matney tore up the lake on the jet ski with cousins and friends; living her best life. Monday evening she started feeling run down and tired while running a low-grade fever. After rest and treatment at home, Brandon took Matney to the doctor Thursday morning. A few concerning symptoms, petechiae on her chest and back, and very a wise pediatrician, led to further testing which showed exceptionally high white blood cell counts and concern for other impacts to Matney's life such as kidney failure so we were prompted to report to the local hospital immediately. After a few hours and initial physical work up, Matney and I were flown from the hospital in Springfield, MO to Children's Mercy in Kansas City after the results pointed physicians to a possible leukemia diagnosis. We arrived in Kansas City at 1:45 AM on September 6<sup>th</sup> and that day became a bit of a blur when we were told Matney had acute myeloid leukemia (AML). Within 36 hours of being told our daughter had AML, she started her first round of chemo. Matney has now underwent 3 rounds of inpatient chemo to treat her AML and a pesky gene mutation she was found to have that is producing cancer cells. AML requires inpatient stays as her immune system is completely wiped out and she is susceptible to most any illness because of this. Round 1 was 29 days away from home and our son, Round 2 was 27 days away and we just finished Round 3 after 26 days. Brandon and I stay with Matney at all times or trade off and on to spend time with our son. Days are long in the hospital

and spent trying to keep Matney active, healthy and finding something that sounds good to eat for our daily DoorDash delivery. As we celebrate Christmas at home, we are preparing for a 4<sup>th</sup> round of inpatient chemo to start on December 30<sup>th</sup> in addition to a new oral medication due to the genetic mutation found in her initial bone marrow biopsy and for additional reassurance that the bone marrow transplant is successful in early 2025.

The last 109 days have been challenging, exhausting and full of new information each day. We have been blessed that my parents live near by and have cared for our 11 year old son, Maverick, throughout all of this but it tears us apart to be so far from him. With Matney's diagnosis we learned that a matched sibling donor has a very high success rate and we were blessed to learn that Maverick is a perfect match to be Matney's donor. It is life altering to have one of your children going through something so big but then to have your second child involved to help save her life; is something I can say I never dreamed would happen to our family. We are blessed to be a very close family of four and have a great support system behind us helping us while we are away, caring for our son, and both have jobs that have shown us so much grace and flexibility throughout all of this.

We are so appreciative of the assistance we have received from the Jake Cavanaugh Foundation, from our community and family and friends. With your help, our family is facing less obstacles financially and we cannot express our gratitude in enough words. Matney has faced obstacles in the last 109 days that no child should ever face and she will continue to have many more in the years to come with decisions that are hard for parents to understand, let alone their children. We are standing firm in our faith throughout all of this and know the power of prayer and an army of angels fighting for us, will help Matney overcome. Our mantra has become Faith Over Fear and we are lead by several verses - **Isaiah 41:10, NIV** So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

- Pic 1 – first day of HS
- Pic 2 – Maverick and Matney – the light in our eyes!
- Pic 3 – Matney keeping herself busy in the hospital during Round 1
- Pic 4 – Day 24 – Matney requested a hospital volunteer shave her head as she had lost a majority of her hair and it was bothering her mentally/physically to see it fall out.
- Pic 5 – Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup> – Taylor Swift visited Children's Mercy to meet children!

Thank you for allowing me to share our story and we wish you all a Christmas filled with wonderful memories and Christmas and blessed 2025.

Blessings,

Ashley Crawford

[Acarpenter143@hotmail.com](mailto:Acarpenter143@hotmail.com)

417-894-0304