

September 17th: Sammi's Story, written on July 2nd by her mom, Jacque, to mark her "cancerversary"

I hate July 2nd. I wish I could delete this day from the calendar, from all existence. 11 years ago today the attending and resident came into our ER room at St. Luke's Hospital and sat across from me and said words I can never get out of my head. "Your daughter has cancer, leukemia." I can remember everything from that day like it was yesterday. I remember thinking these doctors are idiots, they have no idea what they are talking about, there is no way my child has cancer. No one in my family has ever been diagnosed with cancer. There's no way my child...my little, sweet two year-old princess...has cancer. We just had her two year-old check up 5 months ago and she was perfectly healthy! 11 years ago, while I am thankful and blessed that she is cured, I am still angry! I'm still sad every time I see her struggling with pain in her ankles and knees caused by cancer and it's treatment. And it breaks my heart when she struggles with schoolwork because of the longterm side effects from those three years of daily chemo being pumped through her body. I'm worried what her future holds...will her heart be damaged from the poisonous two chemotherapy agents she was given at just 29 months-old. Did you know she has already had the maximum lifetime dosage of two highly toxic chemotherapies? What if she gets a secondary cancer and needs those drugs? Every chemo she was given, and she took over a dozen different chemos, had a warning of a secondary cancer diagnosis. On July 4th when we signed off on her treatment protocol, they told us she has a significant chance of developing a similar type of leukemia - AML - after age 65. My only answer to that is, I can only hope and pray we get her to 65. I wish I had words to explain what all the support and prayers have meant for us over the past 10 years. We thank everyone who has supported Sammi and our family! We are truly blessed she is cured and we get to watch her grow up. She truly is amazing, strong, beautiful, and a SURVIVOR!!! But I hate this crapiversary!