

FAITH: Family faces child's cancer

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minated 2- and 3-year olds I'd ever seen."

The journey has been paved with many miracles already, and the Frenches are waiting to see what comes next. Whatever comes, they say they have faith and confidence in God. They believe Logan has a purpose in life, and that purpose will be fulfilled.

Sam says, "This has helped us to understand that we have to put our faith entirely in God. When there are no other options, God shows you that you are his."

It is enough, he says. More challenges are ahead. Before the medical crisis hit, Kacee had worked as a nurse at the University of Tennessee Medical Center NICU (newborn intensive care unit). She recently learned that her Family Medical Leave of Absence extension had not been approved and she would be terminated, losing medical insurance on her entire family.

In November, Logan will have a stem cell transplant

at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. The therapy is necessary because a final high powered blast of chemo needed to wipe out the cancer would kill the bone marrow. Without stem cell replacement, Logan would be killed too.

Kacee will have to stay with Logan in the hospital. Sam, who is self-employed and delivers bread each night, will be remaining home with the three girls.

The community has rallied around the family. Churches have provided food, gift cards and gas cards. Many have conducted fundraisers to help the family. Businesses have conducted fundraisers as well. People have stocked their pantry with groceries, sent money and gifts, and covered them with prayer.

"Every week, the gift cards for groceries and gas have been lifesaving," Kacee says. "The people at Curves have held fundraiser after fundraiser. I can't say enough about them."

A benefit motorcycle ride is being planned for Oct. 16 at noon. Riders will leave from New Life Christian Church in Loudon,

Highway 72, and ride to Kingston and Lenoir City. Later, there will be music and prayer. Riders will have T-shirts. A \$15 donation is requested.

Despite the hardships they face, Kacee says the family has never regretted getting Logan.

"We are glad we were the family chosen to care for Logan through this. He has caused us to grow as Christians. When something really devastates you, you rely on God to carry you."

The family prays for a miracle healing. Kacee notes that regardless of the outcome, "God's plan for Logan is the same today as when he was born. You have to have faith in God, His timing is perfect."

Sam says, "It's been hard having a child this sick, but it has been humbling that God gave me the privilege of caring for Logan through this."

Kacee adds, "Logan has really made me realize none of us are promised tomorrow—none of us. We can't take for granted our healthy kids. We have to remind ourselves every minute of life is precious."



VICKY NEWMAN | NEWS-HERALD

Logan, seated with father Sam French, reaches for potato chips.

"God's plan for Logan is the same today as when he was born. You have to have faith in God; His timing is perfect."

Kacee French

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Increased funding needed for pediatric cancer research

September is Pediatric Cancer Awareness Month, and according to the American Cancer Society, funding for childhood cancers lags behind other cancer research and other diseases.

According to a not-for-profit, 501 (c) (3) organization, called The Cure Starts Now, cancer is the number one disease killer of children in America, claiming more lives than cystic fibrosis, Muscular Dystrophy, asthma and AIDS combined.

Most adult cancers result from lifestyle factors such as smoking, diet occupation and exposure to other cancer causing agents. However, for most childhood cancers, the cause is unknown and cannot be prevented.

Some facts from ACS: • One of five children diagnosed with cancer dies; three of five children diagnosed with cancer suffer from long-term or late onset side effects.

• Common cancer symptoms in children are often suspected to be common illnesses and thus treated as such causing cancer to be found at later stages

• About 20 per cent of adults with cancer show evidence that their disease has spread, yet almost 80% of children show that their cancer has spread to distant sites.

• Nationally, childhood cancer is 20 times more prevalent than pediatric AIDS yet pediatric AIDS receives four times the funding that childhood cancer receives.

• On average, 12,500 children in the US are diagnosed with cancer each year. On average, one in every four elementary schools has a child with cancer.

• Some 2,300 children and teenagers will die each year from cancer.

Several childhood cancers continue to have a very poor prognosis, including brain stem tumors, metastatic sarcomas and relapsed acute lymphoblastic leukemia and relapsed non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

Every day nine children in the United States are diagnosed with a brain tumor. Brain tumors are the leading cause of cancer death from childhood cancer. There are more

than 120 different types of brain tumors, making effective treatment very complicated

• Because brain tumors are located at the control center for thought, emotion and movement, their effects on a child's physical and cognitive abilities can be devastating

The funding for pediatric cancer clinical trials has gone down every year since 2003, and is currently \$26.4 million.

By comparison, National Cancer Institute funding for breast cancer topped \$584 million the same year.

As much as 3-5 times the amount of research money per patient is spent on most adult cancer cases than on children with cancer.

The Cure Starts Now

The Cure Starts Now was organized by Keith and Brooke Desserich after their daughter, Elena died of cancer.

A chapter and presence of The Cure Starts Now is found locally. Dennis and Jody Desserich live in Tellico Village.

So far, the foundation has raised about \$1 million in funding for research, and any protocols will be considered as a candidate for grants.

Two local Tellico Village clubs, Tellico Riders and Village Vettes have joined forces in the battle to find a cure for pediatric brain cancer.

For the second year in a row, the club members will contribute their best recipes to publish a cookbook. The "Taste of Tellico Volume 2" will feature all types of main dishes. The cookbook is the second in a series of cookbooks.

The first "Taste of Tellico" appetizer cookbook, was published in 2009 and was a tremendous success. The books are unique because they bring together a collection of local Tellico resident's favorite, no-fail recipes to create a compilation of cuisine's "Greatest Hits".

The cookbooks are available through any member of the clubs, or by e-mail at: jody.desserich@thecure-startsnow.org. They will be available in October and November at the Yacht Club prior to various club meetings. The proceeds from the sale of cookbooks will benefit The Cure Starts Now Foundation.

