

Hello,

My name is Tucker.



On March 11th, 2024 I was diagnosed with Stage 2 Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

I remember chemotherapy being very difficult. I was frequently in a hospital bed for so long that it felt weird to stand up. The staff at the hospital I was being treated at would tell me about all these procedures I'd have to go through. They would also bring up all of the possible side effects that could happen. I'd always just phase out of these conversations about halfway through, because I couldn't stand to think about how I might feel. Most of your life, you're always told to pay attention, but I think sometimes paying attention can make things worse.

The one thing that kept me occupied and distracted the most was video games. They allowed me to take my mind off whatever I was going through, which made losing a race in Mario Kart seem like the only problem I had to face at that moment. In this situation, not paying attention felt like the exact thing I needed to do throughout my long stays at Mary Bridge Children's Hospital.

Video games helped distance me from the struggles that I was going through. It made my entire treatment feel much less tedious and overbearing. Distractions are always good to help make the pain seemingly disappear, and I know how bad the pain can sometimes be.

Because of my personal experiences, I felt motivated to help others by sharing what helped me the most. I decided to use my Wish to help other kids going through the same thing as me to have the opportunity to find joy and a little distraction from all the things that come with cancer diagnosis and treatment by playing video games of their own with the help from Starlight Gaming Stations.

Being completely honest, you'll never be able to take away the pain. There will always be a feeling of hurt that even the strongest painkillers can't take away. I know this because I've been through numerous situations like that. I can't say for certain what you'll go through or what you'll deal with, and I don't think I can even say that for myself either. But, what I can say for myself is that fighting cancer is not a win-or-lose situation.

I've known many people who have fought cancer, some of which lived, and others who weren't so fortunate. But the one thing I do remember is that no matter what, no matter how hard it hurt them, they would still have a smile on their face. Because beating cancer isn't just about being free of cancer, it's a lot more than that, it's unique. Cancer is not like the other diseases where it just tries to make you kick the bucket. It knows it can already do that if it tried hard enough. Cancer wants to break you, to see you at your absolute worst. When my grandfather was diagnosed with cancer, he never let it take away who he really was. He would always stay strong, happy, and hopeful that better days would come. He never let cancer win by never letting it break him. I believe that's how you truly beat cancer. I hope that you do the same thing.

My hope for you is that these video games give you the chance to not think about what you're going through and just help you find some happiness while you're here. It's important to find those opportunities to have the energy to get through this. Find things in your life that make you happy, and keep clear of the things that don't, because your physical and mental health are equally important. Hopefully this and knowing you're not alone in this fight will help.

Tucker