

Isla's Wish Story

Wish Dad Kevin tells the story of Islas and her powerful wish...

"Our daughter Isla (pronounced eye-luh), who was three years old at the time, was experiencing some strange symptoms that came on fairly rapidly. She had trouble with constipation and was feeling pain in her stomach, as well as trouble sleeping.

This went on for a few days when we finally decided to see our pediatrician. They decided it was probably just constipation related and gave the normal treatment suggestions. Two days later this was still occurring, so we took her to urgent care, same result...

We took her back the next day to her pediatrician, but received no new information. She had also developed very deep and significant bruises on her legs over this time period.

All in all we were scared and frustrated, and no closer to finding an answer to her strange symptoms. Then suddenly and unexpectedly on the morning of November 22nd, 2021, we received our answer.....

Isla's nose began to bleed. Then it continued to bleed. We tried what we knew to do, but nothing could have prepared us for the amount of blood she had lost.

For two hours straight we battled this nosebleed, until finally the blood she had swallowed began coming back up in her vomit, and she was unable to control it. She was pale, gaunt, and so drained that she didn't even seem to notice what was happening anymore. I have never been more scared in my life..... I felt completely hopeless, I had zero control over what was happening to her.

We called 911, and emergency services sent an ambulance. My wife, Ashley, bravely went with Isla to the hospital, and took on the most harrowing ride of her life, as they rushed to keep her conscious and stop the bleeding.

I left our son, 1 year old at the time, with my in-laws and raced to the hospital as quickly as possible.

When I arrived at the room where they were keeping our daughter, she was completely unconscious and receiving an immediate blood transfusion. The nurses explained they took blood for a blood test and would provide us with the results.

An ER doctor came in and explained the most likely results of the blood tests based upon the symptoms. A platelet disorder, or cancer..... He was hoping for the former, but not optimistic, and when he came back with the results, sure enough, it was cancer.

Isla was diagnosed with Burkitt's leukemia on November 22, 2021. It is an extremely rare form of cancer that progresses very rapidly. (When we arrived, she had seven cancerous cells in her blood sample, one day later, she had 21 in the same amount of blood).

Because of the rapid nature of the cancer, they treat it with an equally aggressive form of chemotherapy. Isla would be put on a plan that would very likely send the cancer into remission, but would have devastating side effects.

Over the next 5 months, the 3 of us would spend almost all of our time in hospital rooms. Isla would not get to see her 1 year old brother, as he would be with grandma and grandpa while Isla was in treatment (this was also during the tail end of COVID, so contact had to be minimal with all outside the hospital, as she was immuno-compromised). We only got to be with Liam, our son, for 14 days total in those 5 months.

When Isla was in treatment, she would undergo spinal tap procedures to administer chemo meds, she would sit through blood and platelet transfusions, and would receive IV medication administration through a broviac port that was installed in her chest (what we called her "noodles").

When she wasn't in treatment, she would deal with the incredibly intense side effects of the drugs. She was susceptible to infection, and often would be sent back to the hospital for in-patient care due to fevers and sickness.

She was forced to take numerous medications through her treatment plan, such as steroidal medication, which tastes awful. Her chemotherapy plan alone required a dozen different medications be administered to her intravenously, some were given in lethal doses, followed by recovery medication.

Some of the major side effects she battled through were unbearable to watch for us. After her first round of chemo, she endured throat and mouth sores, which caused her to go nonverbal for almost 2 weeks. She was sad, she was scared, and she was in pain. Alongside the mouth and throat sores, she was also having nosebleeds due to low platelet amounts (common in leukemia patients) however, she had some which caused so much blood loss that we almost lost her..... in our darkest times, we needed to give her some hope.

I had seen Make-a-Wish in various marketing ads, and even watched some of the "My Wish" series on ESPN back in the day. The thought came to my mind to research and see if she was eligible.



I sent in our application, and followed the steps to receive a physician referral. It was important to advocate with the doctor for this, but they were very helpful at our hospital, and willing to do whatever was necessary to give Isla some joy.

Once we received the exciting news of her approval, we were able to provide her with the good news. We began discussing what her wish would be and dreaming of the day that she could be out of the hospital and fulfilling her wish.

Isla decided she wanted to take a trip to Disney World! She has always been a daredevil and loves roller coasters, as well as, relished the opportunity to meet many of her favorite disney characters.



Isla completed treatment after 5 months of inpatient chemotherapy, and came to a full recovery after 18 months of remission. She took her trip to Disney World in the summer of 2023, and we had an incredible time. Glve Kids the World Village was such a special place and we were able to live in peace and joy there while all of our needs were met and so much more.

We are FOREVER grateful for our experience provided by Make-A-Wish."