

SAINTS *Alive!*

Miracles happen because of you



Slow and Steady Wins the Race

You help children like Forest push forward

It was the end of May 2017, and Forest VandenLangenberg was just finishing 5th grade. He enjoyed playing baseball and loved all things outdoors, especially fishing and catching turtles (his favorite animal). As summer began, his mother Jenny noticed lumps on his neck. She took Forest in to have them looked at and the doctors discovered he had acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), a rapidly progressive form of blood cancer. Jenny and her husband Gary were devastated to hear their son's diagnosis. "It is the worst news you can hear, that your child has cancer," said Jenny.



Forest began treatment in Milwaukee, and just one week in, his parents had to make a crucial decision that would change his treatment experience for the entire family. They learned that everything Forest needed was already right here in Green Bay, their hometown, at HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital.

"Having the opportunity for Forest to receive treatment 15 minutes away from home was a God send," explained Jenny. "Being able to live a somewhat 'normal' family life while he battled cancer was such a blessing." Forest underwent treatment for three years and four months at HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital, close to home.

Forest persevered through many ups and downs during his treatment battle with ALL. Jenny and Gary kept a log of his procedures and medications. Over the course of his treatment plan, he received nine different types of chemotherapy, endured **27** spinal taps and spent **72** nights in the hospital. These hospital stays were for infections, low blood counts and side effects of chemotherapy. "If we had not made the decision to move Forest to Green Bay, we would have had to take significant time off work and live apart from the rest of our family for long periods of time," said Jenny, when asked about the importance of our local children's hospital. When chemo was hitting Forest the hardest, he received **26** red blood and **11** platelet transfusions. Forest ingested **5,251** pills, including steroids, antibiotics and chemo pills.



*The VandenLangenberg family visiting the Galapagos Islands.
From left to right: Lake, Jenny, Lily, Gary, Forest and Robin*

During the hardest time of his treatment, Forest wished he could just get away and do things that "normal" kids could do. His ultimate dream was to someday visit the Galapagos Islands to see the giant tortoises in person. It was just a dream, but it gave him hope and strength to keep fighting on.

One of the most difficult times was when his chest port, the access point where he received his chemotherapy, became severely infected. "The hospital stay from his port infection really was hard on him; it took months to heal," said Jenny. Forest was not let out of the hospital for over four weeks straight. He developed severe anxiety, becoming scared and panicked to the point of vomiting each time his port was accessed. That is when the Child Life team stepped in.

"The Child Life team was wonderful," Jenny added.

They tailored a plan of care to fit his needs and eased his anxiety. They were very patient with Forest even though he was difficult to deal with at times. Finally, the Child Life team's perseverance paid off, and shortly after his 13th birthday, something clicked, and Forest became more mature and stronger willed during his treatments.

The VandenLangenbergs began this journey in May 2017 when Forest was just 11 years old. After three years of school had gone by, and countless hospital visits, Forest received his last treatment at the age of 14 in September 2020. From the valet parkers, to the nurses, to cleaning staff; the Child Life team, and doctors on the 10th floor and in the clinic, every single person was extremely caring and genuine. "They really do feel like family," said Jenny reflecting. "It felt strange leaving and walking away from the bonds we made during our time at HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital."

Forest is now a sophomore in high school and is living a normal life. He just received his driver's license and has taken up hunting as a hobby. And his wish to visit the Galapagos Islands finally came true after five years. The VandenLangenbergs took a family trip to see the giant tortoises on the islands, to celebrate Forest overcoming his journey as he won the battle against cancer.

All the compassion and care that saved Forest's life and helped his family through this journey, right here in their hometown, was only made possible because of **YOUR** generosity. Your donations to the HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital continue to allow kids like Forest a second chance at life while keeping them close to home. Thank you!



Compassionate Care

Brightening the Lives of Cancer Patients

Receiving a cancer diagnosis is very difficult to endure and many patients and families struggle to deal with several aspects of their treatment. Through compassionate care services, **YOU** brighten moments and bring comfort to patients at the HSHS St. Vincent Hospital Cancer Centers.

The emotional and financial strain facing cancer patients who walk through the doors at the HSHS St. Vincent Hospital Cancer Center is **immense**. Our caregivers see first-hand the impact that cancer treatments have on patients and their families. Treatments and medications can be very expensive, and it is not uncommon for patients to face thousands of dollars in medication costs each month. Not all are covered by insurance.

Any additional support services that include a cost to participate would likely be outside the scope of what many cancer patients can afford. Our Compassionate Care program addresses those concerns and helps vulnerable patients and their families with support services to improve their physical, emotional, spiritual and financial well-being.

All patients starting their first round of chemotherapy receive a water bottle, and radiation patients receive a mug after the completion of their treatment. This program focuses on providing compassion and comfort during what is an incredibly challenging time in their lives.



COMPONENTS INCLUDE:



Gas Cards: Patients can receive gas cards to get to and from their appointments, which help them feel comfort and stability.



Cafeteria vouchers: Vouchers are distributed to low-income patients and their families who do not have money to pay for a meal while receiving treatment. This helps minimize the stress and anxiety caused by long appointment wait times.



Box store gift cards: These gift cards help patients purchase groceries (when they do not have any food at home) or purchase over the counter treatments such as protein powder, pain medications, vitamins, and supplements.



Hotel Accommodations: Providing hotel accommodations reduces the financial burden on patients who are already paying for expensive treatments and medications. It also reduces the stress of having to travel back and forth to the hospital over an extended period of time.

Compassionate care services are supported entirely by generous donors like **YOU!** And because of that generosity, cancer patients at the HSHS St. Vincent Hospital Cancer Centers have smiles brought to their faces through small acts of comfort.

Healthy Habits: A Key to Oncology Treatment Plans

Jasmine has new skills to care for cancer patients because of **YOU!**

Oncology dietitians are key members of the care team for any patient who walks through the doors of the HSHS St. Vincent Hospital Cancer Center. These specialized caregivers are responsible for assessing a cancer patient's nutrition, which is critical to their treatment plan. By achieving good overall health, proper nutrition can help reduce the risk of cancer, keep patients healthier during treatment and combat side effects and illness.

Dietitians work one-on-one with patients, as well as their families and caregivers, to figure out which foods patients can eat, how to develop these good habits and how making these choices will allow their patients to feel more in control. Following a dietitian's plan can reduce chemo-induced weight loss, unplanned hospitalizations and even help patients survive their fight against cancer.

"Our patients and their families look to us for support in making decisions that ultimately impact their quality and duration of life. It is my job to keep my knowledge of supportive nutrition services and interventions relevant to help them throughout their treatment and recovery,"

said Jasmine Ditter, oncology clinical dietitian at HSHS St. Vincent Hospital Cancer Center.

Because of your support the HSHS St. Vincent Hospital Cancer Center will be sending Jasmine to an upcoming conference where she will learn new techniques and skills to help ensure patients start on the right track as they begin their battle with cancer.

"By taking part in this conference, I hope to learn more about the ways we can continue to support our high-risk patients undergoing treatment for their diagnosis," said Jasmine. "While also learning about how our practice has grown to help patients who, in the past, may have been considered at a lower risk for nutritional deficiencies or there was a lack of knowledge on possible support that could be provided through nutrition counseling."

YOU help keep our clinicians committed to excellence through education and our patients benefit every day from that expertise!

DID YOU KNOW?

Your Gift Impacts Everyone 100% of YOUR support makes a difference

Did you know that **100% of your donation** helps patients who walk through the doors of both HSHS St. Vincent and St. Mary's Hospitals? Your contribution allows our medical professionals to continue to stay current with the best medical practices, which ensure their patients are getting expert care during their stay.

12 Months: 12 Gifts of Healing and Hope

Become a *monthly donor* today

Providing renewed health and hope to patients at HSHS St. Vincent and St. Mary's Hospital is now easier than ever. By becoming a monthly donor, you can continually comfort and heal the patients in our care. As a monthly donor, you will:

- Make automatic monthly donations paid from your credit card.
- Designate your gift to a specific need like cancer care or to the area of greatest need.
- Receive an annual acknowledgment letter for tax purposes.
- Elect to change or suspend your donation at any time.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more, please contact us at 920-433-8620 or WI-Foundations@hshs.org.



BEGINNING IS EASY!

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