

Story of Bobby Milward (6/23/91 - 10/23/02)

My son Bobby was a wonderful, healthy, athletic, good humored, energetic, lovable, child. I could go on and on with adjectives to describe Bobby...all of them good. He loved his mommy and his daddy and his sister and brother. His extended was loved, as well. His love was always unconditional and Bobby could never do enough for someone he loved. He always wanted to please everyone and wanted no one unhappy about anything.

On President's Day weekend in 2001, Bobby spent the weekend at a baseball camp at the local college campus. He did very well! He had off school on Monday for the holiday and went to school like any other normal day on Tuesday. On Wednesday, 2/21/01, Bobby woke up and our world changed forever.

Bobby was seeing ghosts and spitting all over the house because they were pouring cement down his throat. We would later find out that he was having auras prior to a major seizure that ended up happening in the parking lot of the local hospital. Upon seeing Bobby, the doctors knew they were dealing with something they were uncomfortable with so they contacted The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and had a trauma team come to get Bobby.

We were told after Bobby's MRI at CHOP that his brain was very full of fluid and causing seizures, however for a week they were not sure what they were dealing with. In that week Bobby was treated for encephalitis, meningitis, and several other infections. He had one surgery to retrieve a brain biopsy and insert a ventrix. His second surgery a couple days later was to remove the ventrix and insert a permanent shunt and retrieve a larger biopsy. He continued to have major seizures and remained vented. Finally, the diagnosis was in and we were told that Bobby had a very rare, inoperable, terminal brain tumor. Gliomatosis Cerebri changed our lives forever.

His prognosis was very grim! We were told the average life span after diagnosis was 3 months to a year. We started radiation right away and continued this treatment for 26 weeks. Then we started chemo (Temodar) and this chemo kept the tumor at bay for 12 months. After that the tumor started growing again and we were put on a trial of another chemo (TFI), which was horrible.

In June/July of 2002, Bobby was having upwards of 40 to 60 seizures daily along with suffering the effects of his latest chemo. In July he was hospitalized for monitoring of his seizures and had an MRI.

This test showed that Bobby's tumor was significantly growing and the doctors felt at this point we should take Bobby off the chemo and they gave Bobby a prognosis of two months.

Bobby lived for three more months and passed away on October 23, 2002. Bobby was 9 when he was diagnosed and 11 when he died. In the 20 months we had with Bobby after he was diagnosed, we lived several lifetimes for and with Bobby. We loved and lived continuously and above and beyond. We filled our minds with so many wonderful memories of Bobby — we went on vacations, sporting events, the beach, took pictures and movies, and spent so much quality time with Bobby and the entire family.

As I said before, Bobby was an amazing child! He was definitely a gift from Heaven for us to enjoy for a while. I may never fully understand why this happened to my son, Bobby or to our family, but I do know that if God needed an angel, he took the Best.

We will never forget Bobby and everyday of my life since I wonder if there was anything more we could have done. I am continually told that we did everything possible. There needs to be more research for brain tumor victims.

—Heidi Milward (Mom)