

Transform a life, and your own

Meet Kellie

On July 3, 2004, 10-year-old Kellie was enjoying a summer camping trip with her family. It was unusual for Kellie to complain, but when an apparent bug bite on her left knee began to cause severe pain and show signs of infection, her parents decided to take her to the hospital ER.

Tests ruled out the suspected bug bite, but revealed an extremely high white blood cell count. Her condition worsened rapidly, so Kellie was flown to the nearest children's hospital, where immediate transfusions of platelets and red blood cells sustained her life until doctors could learn more. A battery of tests confirmed that Kellie's life was being threatened by the most aggressive form of leukemia - Acute Myelogenous Leukemia (AML).

Instead of celebrating on Independence Day, Kellie began chemotherapy. Over the next nine months, she endured five rounds of treatments accompanied by all the unpleasant side effects - nausea, pain and hair loss. Kellie relied on regular transfusions of red blood cells to fight anemia and platelets to offset the effects of chemotherapy. Kellie's mom credits blood donors for restoring their hope. **"She could barely lift her head off the pillow," Tammy said. "After the first transfusion, Kellie was dancing in her room within a few hours. It took just one unit of blood to change the life of our sick child."**

After a year of treatments, Kellie went into remission, but the cancer returned six months later. It was time for two more rounds of chemotherapy accompanied by blood transfusions and the hope that she would be



37 RED CELLS
94 PLATELETS
Leukemia

strong enough to undergo a bone marrow transplant. Kellie responded to treatments and went back into remission quickly. She received her lifesaving bone marrow transplant on Sept. 22, 2006.

Throughout her battle with leukemia, Kellie has made it her mission to help other kids with cancer by raising funds for local charities. She has strung together "beads of courage" to represent the 131 lifesaving blood transfusions she has received. "If you can help, please do so. If you're not able to give blood, please ask some friends to donate for you," she said.

In 2014, Kellie celebrated 10 years since her diagnosis by raising money for the American Cancer Society and encouraging new people to become blood donors. Kellie graduated from high school and works at a hospital.



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