

Anna

5 years old

DIAGNOSIS:

Anna was found to have t-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia in early 2009.

ANNA'S STORY:

Anna developed bruises on her arms and legs that didn't go away, even after a few weeks. Then one night, during bath time, Anna's mom, Kristen, was startled to see a rash across her little girl's chest. When she noticed that her usually sunny daughter was becoming more and more lethargic, mother's intuition kicked in. This was something serious, Kristen felt. The next day, she took Anna to the pediatrician.

At the doctor's office, Anna underwent an ultrasound and blood work. When Anna's doctor referred the family to the local St. Jude Children's Research Hospital affiliate, Kristen felt her dread rising. At the affiliate, Anna underwent more tests. The results were devastating: Anna suffered from t-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

AT ST. JUDE:

The next day, Anna and Kristen arrived at St. Jude, where Anna quickly started chemotherapy on a two-and-a-half year treatment plan. "I don't think I was expecting the overwhelming peace that I received when I walked through the doors that night," remembered Kristen. "I can't put it into words. There's such support for the parents."

Anna and Kristen spent the first six weeks of her treatment in Memphis. "Something like this puts life in perspective," Kristen said. "We thank St. Jude every day for saving Anna." Anna is able to do her weekly chemotherapy at the local St. Jude affiliate. She takes oral chemotherapy each day, and returns to Memphis once a month for intense chemotherapy. Happily, she is responding well to treatment.

Kristen and her husband are grateful for the donors who support St. Jude. Though the family has medical insurance, the night Anna's cancer was diagnosed, they remember wondering how they would pay for her treatment. "Never receiving a bill from St. Jude ... that is a true blessing," said Kristen.

Anna is a vibrant little girl who loves to play tea and go fishing with her family.

