

Emily - The Fighting Princess

July 13, 2010

WISH #43

Camp Lejeune, NC



On December 10th, 2009, Active Duty Marine James Brown's 2 1/2 year old daughter, Emily, was rushed to a hospital 3 1/2 hours from home. She was diagnosed with a rare childhood cancer known as a Wilms Tumor (Stage 2). Surgeons removed the grapefruit sized tumor and her left kidney on December 16th, 2009 and she began chemotherapy on December 30th. Brown and his wife, Katie, made weekly trips to the hospital for chemotherapy until February 19th, when Emily was admitted for surgery. The first set of follow-up scans revealed the spot on their daughters right lung had not changed, so surgeons performed a lung biopsy which meant a small chunk of her lung had to be removed. She started back to chemotherapy just 5 days after her second surgery. She will now undergo chemotherapy every 3 weeks and have scans taken every 6 weeks to ensure she is tumor free. She has recently had some fevers and low blood counts, so they are doing all they can to avoid another hospitalization. Recently, they've needed to stay in a hotel close to the chemo clinic, and Katie explained "It just isn't worth risking the 3 1/2 hr drive home and then the drive back should something happen."

It is hoped that she will be done with chemotherapy by September and celebrate her 3rd birthday cancer free! She has lost her hair, but not her smile!

Brown and his wife also have two older children: Jacob, 9 and Dylan, 6. Jacob, was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) in early 2009 and Dylan was diagnosed with ADHD and an Emotional Disorder just days before their little sister started chemotherapy. In the midst of all this, their only vehicle has had to have many repairs in order to keep it running. It still requires more repairs. This one income family has become overwhelmed by the financial stress and often wonder how they are going to pay the debt incurred from these frequent trips that require money for gas, healthy food and lodging, as well as everyday expenses like groceries and car insurance. They also have had to buy airline tickets to bring family members out to care for the older children while they were with Emily in treatment. Items such as a countertop water filter have become necessary to ensure the water is clean enough for Emily's consumption, and medical supplies such as face masks have added on to their growing debt.

The Browns have more than they can handle financially, emotionally and physically. Katie has had issues with depression and physical pain related to stress and lack of physical exercise. There's just no time to care for herself. A good friend and fellow Marine contacted *Wish For Our Heroes* to ask for help.

***Wish For Our Heroes* was able to provide:**

- Auto repairs
- A Dell Laptop (to manage their bills and update friends on Emily's status from the hospital)
- A printer donated by a Wish For Our Heroes volunteer
- A Sole treadmill (so Katie can get some exercise and relieve stress)
- A \$100 shopping spree for Emily to brighten her day



Emily - post surgery (Dec '09)

W4OH received the following thanks from Katie on July 13, 2010 for the computer, "We can actually do travel claims, do schoolwork (which means I can go back to college this fall...something we were writing off as not likely), and stay in touch with everyone no matter where we are...we have never even imagined having such an amazing gift!"

... "You all have gone above and beyond and when you told us about the treadmill, the tears came hard...my day definitely brightened knowing that very soon I may have some stress relief and the chance to feel better about myself again and the strength to continue to care for Emily and the boys! The computer and car repairs are such a huge blessing and a thank you just does not seem enough!"

James and Katie, *Wish For Our Heroes* is proud and happy to be able to help you through this trying time. We are aware of what your family sacrifices every day for our country, and we appreciate it very much. You are all amazing individuals and you deserve more than we could ever provide, but we hope our efforts help brighten your days.

