

Our Reasons to Run: Christopher

Christopher's story, as told by his Mom Analiet:

It all began when Christopher complained of back pain along with an uncontrollable fever that lasted for about 10 days. Several doctors in different clinics in Lima, Peru examined him and none could give us a reason for his symptoms beyond, "it's something viral". We knew there was something more so we decided to return to Miami to find out what was making our son so sick. From the airport we went directly to Holtz Children's Hospital where the doctors performed their exams. And on January 17, 2018, just two days after his fourth birthday, we received the terrible news that Christopher had Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL). At that exact moment our lives changed forever. I was 3 months pregnant with my second child; my Christopher was unaware of what was ahead and my husband was destroyed. Fortunately, we turned towards each other and found the strength to move forward.



Christopher started chemotherapy immediately and it has already been a year and a half since we began this journey. Some days are better than others. Visits to the clinic for check-ups and chemo are now part of our routine. Sometimes his treatments are postponed as the chemo puts undue stress on his liver's filtering function. Waiting for the results of his blood tests every week is very stressful and all we can do is pray that all is well enough for him to continue.

My Christopher is now another child. He has learned to overcome every fear; and nothing stops him. He refers to his blood as "ketchup" and to the needle used to access his port as a "butterfly". He sings, "I believe I can fly" as he climbs onto the examining table. When he has his port accessed, he does the superhero which is to suck in his tummy in and puff out his chest like Batman. On his own he has learned the importance of seeing the positive in every negative. He is always smiling, even when he's hooked up to an IV saying he needs it to "to get more energy". He now shows other children how to take their medicines when at the beginning he could barely stand how badly they smelled. Every day he helps us see the good and gives us the strength to move forward.



Christopher still has a couple more years of treatment but we know that with the help of the wonderful people at UM/Alex's place and the support of organizations like Sofia's Hope he'll be just fine. **My Christopher is a fighter and he will win the battle!**

Thank you for participating in the Reason to Run 5K and helping children and families like my own!