

# One Day at a Time

*As told by mom Valerie and daughter Belle (10 years old)*



**Mom:** In April of 2017 my husband and I separated. My mom and brother moved here from Arizona to help me with my three kids (10, 14 and 16). I was working at King Soopers as the assistant baking manager and I switched my schedule to work nights, baking from midnight until 8am, while they were home with my kids. In August, my mom was diagnosed with Stage 4, metastatic breast cancer and she passed away on December 14th.

**Bella:** In January, I was getting undressed for a shower one night and I noticed this huge bump under my neck. It was the size of a baseball. I was like, "What is that?" The next day I went to my school nurse and she told me that I should not be in school and should go the hospital right away. We went to the hospital and I had an ultrasound, MRI, biopsy, and then surgery. They found out I had cancer and we had my port put in to start my cancer treatments.

**Mom:** On April 6th Bella was diagnosed with Stage 3 Hodgkin's lymphoma. We had to go to appointments, treatments; it was go, go, go all day. I could never rest because I was going all day and working at night. I literally had no sleep. I had to take a leave of absence from my job in April and have been on leave since. My two older kids had to move to live with family. I'm very thankful they could help us because there is no way I could do it on my own.

Bella's treatment was four rounds of chemotherapy and 18 sessions of radiation. Chemo was hard. They gave her six different kinds of chemo and each session of chemo runs 21 days. In between chemo they would test her blood counts and she had to get platelets and had several transfusions. When they finished her chemo, they jumped right into radiation, which was five days a week for four weeks. She had radiation on her neck, upper torso and abdomen.

**Bella:** It's hard to go through treatment when you're young. It's hard to keep your emotions together. It's hard to keep things together, one week you're crying, the next day you're throwing up, the next day you're happy, the next day you're crying.

**Mom:** The social worker came into the hospital room and asked if there was anything she could get for us. I told her, "We could use food please. We're up on the 7th floor, the cafeteria is all the way down on the other side of the hospital and it is just me." If I was to go to the cafeteria to get food, I'd have to leave Bella and I didn't want to leave her side.

She brought me a green There With Care bag that was filled with juices, macaroni and cheese, snacks and so much more. She told me about There With Care and since then they have brought me groceries and gas cards, which really help so much. They helped with Bella's birthday too and brought us a cake and a present for her.

I'm so stressed, I forget to do important things. I still need to pay bills, get groceries and do laundry. There With Care bringing groceries to the house is a huge help; it saves me so much time. I don't have to go to the store to shop and it also saves me money that I can put towards other things that are necessary. The stress relief makes such a tremendous difference. It's like the butterfly effect. They say a butterfly flaps its wings over here and over there it's creating a hurricane. You get a little help and then it all comes together and suddenly I'm accomplishing things. Every little bit makes a difference..

Losing my husband, then losing my mom and then my daughter being diagnosed was a lot at once. Myself personally, I never got the chance to really grieve. Inside I kept saying, "I just have to hold it together. Keep on my mom face, hold it together and it's going to be okay." This whole past year I've been trying to just take it one day at a time. We have scans at the end of the month and then we'll know if all of the treatments are working.

**Bella:** My mom was there with me 24/7. She never left my side. I'll never stop loving you mom.

**Mom:** I'll always love you too Bella.



## Impact of Program Care

- 36%** **Meal Program:** Grocery delivery and prepared (frozen and hot) meal delivery
- 27%** **Patient and Sibling Support Program:** Babysitting, mentoring, and tutoring for patients and siblings
- 13%** **Transportation Program:** Transportation to and from hospitals, medical appointments and treatments, schools, and activities; including gasoline cost assistance
- 12%** **Home Maintenance Program:** Housecleaning, laundry service, lawn and garden care, pet care during hospital admission, industrial cleaning for immune compromised children, home modifications for disability access
- 10%** **Baby Essentials Program:** Gently used baby clothing, books, toys, car seats, strollers, cribs and other essential items for families leaving the Neo-natal ICU
- 1%** **Professional Services Program:** A range of professional services including: accounting services, legal services, translation services, alternative therapies, family or individual counseling, art therapy, hair cuts, massage therapy
- .5%** **Phone & Information Technology Program:** Access to computers and telephones to increase families' access to medical services and resource libraries
- .5%** **Soup Station Program:** Nutritious and warm soup for families in the hospital twice a month, served by volunteers in the Ronald McDonald House Room at Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children at P/SL.

Percentages are based on direct program expenses as of 12/31/2017.



## Family Support, Where it Counts

- 87%** Of families we serve live in financial distress
- 100 days** Average time a family receives There With Care support
- \$4,022** Average cost to serve a family through a medical crisis
- 547** Total number of families served in 2017
- 575** Number of families we anticipate serving in 2018

## Thank You to Our Volunteers and Donors for Your Incredible Gifts:

*In-kind and donated numbers (from the inception of There With Care to the present):*

- \$5,066,298** Donated in-kind items
- \$4,481,718** Donated volunteer and professional service hours

## Beautiful Awnee

**A**wnee, 15 years old, lives with her mom Tracy and her dog Eleanor. She was diagnosed two and a half years ago with Philadelphia chromosome - leukemia, a rare classification that is known as high risk. Since diagnosis, Awnee has missed all of Middle School and she will miss the first two years of High School.

In November Awnee completed her last in-patient treatment and was able to ring the bell in the infusion center. She will continue in-home treatment until tests in December, which will determine the next course of action.

There With Care is honored to support Awnee and her mom Tracy with deliveries of toiletry items, housecleaning products, groceries and transportation assistance. We hold Awnee and her mom in our hearts and will continue to be there for their family on their journey.

*"It's those little things. You wonder where that extra hand is going to come from. To get fresh items and food, and have it continuously coming, is such a gift. I think it's important for any family going through this to know that there is an extended arm and it's important."*

- Mom Tracy



Awnee Ringing the Infusion Bell After Her Last Treatment with Mom Tracy, Sister Leilani and Dog Eleanor