

## It's the Love and We Can Feel It

*As told by parents Valarie and Jimmy*

**Mom:** When our son Jimmy-Rey was two, he had so much energy. Then one day I started noticing something wasn't quite right. He wasn't eating as much, wasn't really playing and running around the house and his energy started to really decline.

In the middle of the night he woke up crying and grabbing his head and I just had a really bad feeling in my heart that something wasn't right. I took him to the doctor, who said he's fine and to keep him hydrated. Then, I took him to the dentist and asked if he had a tooth infection or something and they said everything was fine. I took him back to the doctor and I told her, "He's not eating, doesn't have energy, he's having headaches and I know something is not right." She said, "You know, let's get an MRI right away."

**Mom and Dad:** We got the MRI that same day and shortly after, one of the nurses came and asked us to go into a side room. That's where three doctors met us and explained they found a large brain tumor and they needed to send us to a children's hospital. His doctor said if we wouldn't have gotten that MRI, he probably wouldn't have lasted another few weeks, which was terrifying.

Jimmy-Rey was diagnosed on a Tuesday and it was just really scary from there. The doctors said, "Let's get him into the operating room quickly," so he had the surgery on Thursday morning to remove the cancerous brain tumor. After surgery, because this type of tumor is aggressive, they decided it was important to also do radiation. When he finished, we thought we were done with treatment, we thought everything was good.



*Jimmy-Rey two days post surgery*



*Jimmy-Rey with puppy Raphaela*

Then, all of a sudden, the COVID-19 virus hit. It was really scary to know that you have somebody with a compromised immune system that's extremely low. You've got to be really, really safe. And our son, he's so tiny that his immune system is just very weak, there was a point where his immune system was at zero.

**Dad:** I was out looking all over the place for supplies in the stores. Toilet paper was out, Lysol wipes, disinfectant spray, even cleaning supplies were out. Then, we got a call from Jimmy-Rey's oncologist that she wanted to start chemotherapy immediately. That was a huge shock to us and we were scared. We didn't know how we were going to keep our home clean, how we were going to keep any diseases, illnesses out of our house. The first people we reached out to was There With Care in hopes they might help us because we couldn't go to the grocery store. We couldn't risk getting Jimmy-Rey sick at all.

We called our Program Coordinator Julie, who was amazing and she immediately said, "We would love to come and help you guys." We were able to get Clorox wipes, Lysol spray, two full bags of cleaning supplies, laundry detergent, toilet paper, food and diapers. Over the months, Julie would give us a personal call every other week, but she would take the time to also ask, "How is he doing? How is his treatment going?" She wanted to know, she genuinely cared. *(Continued on back)*

# How We Care | *By the Numbers*

## In 15 years There With Care has:

Served nearly **4,500** families; approximately **20,000** people

Received **\$6,078,725** in donated in-kind items

Received **\$5,347,205** in donated volunteer and professional service hours

**Diversity of families served:** 51% Latino, African American, Black, Native American, Indian, Asian and Other; 49% Caucasian



Please consider joining the Care Club, where your recurring monthly gifts ensure families will have a safety net throughout the year.

Join the Care Club at: [therewithcare.org/careclub](https://therewithcare.org/careclub)

## Family care by the numbers:

**\$4,169** average cost to serve a family through crisis

**111** average days a family receives There With Care support

**675 families** anticipated to be served in 2020

**87% of families** live in financial distress

**100% of families** are referred by hospital social workers based on need and circumstances



Leanna and sisters Talaya and Kylie



Honored with a **GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency**, There With Care gives funding priority to programs that serve families.

**76% Programs** • **17% Fundraising** • **7% Administrative**

## It's the Love and We Can Feel It *(Continued from front)*



Jimmy-Rey playing with band-aids

There With Care helped carry us through our journey with our son, we didn't have to worry about anything besides getting him to the hospital, caring for him, loving him, nurturing him through his chemo and treatments and we couldn't be more grateful for that. They helped with groceries, Crock-Pot meals, family toiletries, gas cards to get to the hospital and the daily necessities you need to get

through everyday life. The packages were put together thinking about what families will use and they also included special toys for Jimmy-Rey.

The Volunteers are amazing and the sweetest people. Before COVID-19, they would bring everything inside. Then, after COVID-19 they couldn't come in, so they carried deliveries to our third-floor apartment and left them outside, then texted us before they drove away. They are so careful, and the care still has the same amount of kindness. Even though we can't have contact anymore, they're still there. It's the love and we can feel it.

Until this happened to our family, I really didn't think about other families that were going through trauma and going through the toughest diagnosis of their lives. When children are diagnosed with pediatric cancer and other life changing diagnoses, it's just heartbreaking because you know, these family's lives, our lives, have been forever changed. When someone helps you at such a low point of your life, it's something that you'll never forget, and something that you'll be always grateful for forever.

When we get to a better place in life, we would love to go back and help families that are going through what we have been through. We were never prepared for something like this to happen. With everything that Jimmy-Rey has gone through, he's still so positive and he's just so happy all the time. Through everything, he keeps a smile on his face and he just keeps loving.



Jimmy-Rey with mom and dad