

Meet a THON Family

In November 2009, our son Charlie was a typical toddler. He was a happy, energetic little boy with a contagious smile. In early December, however, at the age of sixteen months, he began to experience abdominal pain. We took him to York Hospital, and an ultrasound of his abdomen revealed a mass, due to a tumor pressing on his urethra. We were referred to Hershey Medical Center, where a urologist viewed the ultrasound, examined Charlie and then looked at us and said, "Folks, it isn't good." He immediately suspected that the mass was a rare form of childhood cancer called rhabdomyosarcoma; the diagnosis was confirmed by a biopsy on 12/10. The next few days were a complete whirlwind.

Center. Charlie actually enjoyed his time in the hospital because he associated these visits with the fun toys in the play room, banging on the drum during music therapy, and riding down the hallways in the toy cars provided by the Child Life Program.

Charlie completed treatment in September 2010. A biopsy in October 2010 revealed no active cancer cells, and all of his post-treatment scans have been clear. Today, he is a happy, healthy and strong boy. We are so blessed to have come this far, and we are grateful to THON and the Four Diamonds Fund for supporting us throughout our journey.



February 2010

Charlie began his 42 weeks of chemotherapy on 12/15. We found ourselves struggling to process all of the news; all of the hopes and dreams we had for our son were threatened. Our sense of security was gone and Charlie's future was in question. We needed to tackle this challenge head-on. Shortly after Charlie's diagnosis, our social worker at Hershey Medical Center introduced us to the Four

Diamonds Fund. We never knew such an organization existed; it immediately provided so much comfort to know that we could focus on getting Charlie better and didn't have to worry about how we would afford treatment. Treatment became a full-time job with no time-off; there is simply no way to do it alone.

The Four Diamonds Fund gave us **STRENGTH** by allowing us to focus on getting Charlie better rather than stressing about the cost and stress of treatment, provided **COURAGE** through their competent physicians and an enormous network of support, demonstrates **HONESTY** by consistently fulfilling their commitment to support families on their cancer journey, and fosters **WISDOM** by supporting research toward improving treatment and treatment outcomes. It is reassuring to know that there are researchers who are diligently tackling pediatric cancer so that, someday, there will be a cure.

It is evident that our emotional needs, not just our medical needs, are an integral part of the care provided at Hershey Medical



November 2010



June 2011

In 2011, our family attended our first THON and witnessed the dedication of thousands of Penn State students. Anyone who doubts the genuine kindness of strangers need only set foot onto the floor of the Bryce Jordan Center, and their faith in humanity will be renewed. Their year-long perseverance in raising funds and their resolve to conquer pediatric cancer is pure and sincere.