

Many of you may be familiar with our miracle story. In fact, he is here today. Kyle, our youngest son had just graduated from high school and was in college, his life planned and on track. He started not feeling well, not being able to eat. After several doctor's visits, on Monday we received the dreadful news that he had cancer. That Wednesday, the day before Thanksgiving in 2012, he had his first surgery at Trident hospital. They removed one tumor the size of a basketball from his abdomen, but couldn't do anything about the soccer ball sized tumor near his bladder. He spent the next two weeks in the hospital because he was malnourished.

They took two weeks to confirm the kind of cancer, the oncologist had never seen this type of very rare cancer, about 200 cases worldwide each year. He was referred to MUSC pediatric hospital because the diagnosis was DSRCT, a pediatric cancer. He was finally admitted to MUSC on New Year's Eve because of complications to begin chemotherapy. During that six months (180 days) he spent 100 plus nights in the hospital. Miracle #1: he never spent time alone in the hospital, Shirley and I and his Uncle Bill spent numerous days and nights with Kyle encouraging him to take walks, drink, and all the other things they wanted him to do. We all got tired of hearing "In just a minute"

The doctors were not very encouraging, giving Kyle only a 30% chance of surviving five years. We met with numerous doctors, during one appointment they told us of a trial program at MD Anderson hospital in Houston Texas. However, the doctor didn't think Kyle would qualify for the program and suggested we consider Kyle's quality of life. (I have gotten where I hate that phrase) Kyle said we should at least try. Soon we were on our way to Texas for a consult. We met with Dr. Hayes-Jordan and she accepted him into the program. They told us our insurance would not cover the treatment and we needed to pay \$200,000 up front and it could cost \$400,000. Skipping forward, after a battle with insurance, Dr. Hayes-Jordan was on the phone several times with insurance – once she spent six hours on the phone explaining the treatment, I called numerous times to insurance, State representatives (I have

state insurance since I am a teacher, Ombudsman, anyone I could think of to help. Prayers were answered, insurance finally agreed to cover Kyle.

Miracle #2: They had to do another surgery (I forget how many Kyle had before and after this one). They expected it to take about 8 to 10 hours, 16 hours later, Dr. Hayes Jordan came out to talk to us. She looked exhausted. She told us she almost gave up because she couldn't get her hands in Kyle's abdomen because of the size of the tumor. She said her nurses encouraged her to keep trying, saying she was the only one there who could save this boy. They started praying. (We found out that her undergraduate studies had been in theology, but she felt a calling to medicine.) She did not give up and eventually got all the tumor.

We stayed many weeks at the Ronald McDonald house in Houston. While there, we met six other families with children that were being treated for the same cancer. One from Russia, one from England, and four from here in the US. Miracle #3: Of the seven kids, only Kyle has survived. After Kyle had completed the treatments and was recovering, the oncologist Dr. Jurassic at MUSC confided with me that she honestly thought Kyle's chances were much less than the 30% she originally told us.

During this whole time Kyle's girlfriend of 10 years, now fiancé stuck by him, accompanying him several times to Houston with us to support him. She is a strong young lady. Kyle is engaged to be married November 10<sup>th</sup> of this year and is graduating from the Citadel with a degree in electrical engineering in May. He is just about 6 years behind where he had planned to be. There were many more miracles that happened at just the right time throughout this whole ordeal. I am humbled by, and I thank God for the love and support of family, friends, community and our church.