

Infant Diagnosed With Cancer Survives Jonathan—A Symbol Of Hope To Cancer Patients

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LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Cancer. The word strikes fear in every parent's heart. It was the word that Barry and Linda Bruce heard applied to their 9-month-old son almost five years ago.

Fortunately, for the Bruces, their story has a happy ending. Jonathan is now an energetic 5-year-old. The only trace of his brush with cancer is a jagged scar that stretches across his tummy.

Jonathan's story is one that offers hope to others in this month that the American Cancer Society designated as Daffodil Days. The daffodil is recognized as the first flower of spring and a symbol of hope — hope that cancer can be cured.

Cancer was the last word that Linda expected to hear the morning that she took her plump, healthy baby for his nine-month checkup.

But as the doctor's hands paused on Jonathan's stomach during a routine exam, he felt a mass in the baby's abdomen.

"I was thankful that my husband always made it a point to take off from his job and go along on doctor's appointments," Linda said. Immediately the Bruces took Jonathan to Lancaster General Hospital for an ultrasound.

"When the technician did the work, then brought in a second person and nobody was talking — I knew it was bad news," Linda

recalled.

The word the pediatrician used was foreign to Linda but one that she perceived signaled cancer — neuroblastoma.

The couple were aghast that cancer could happen to them. "I had been a fanatic about following all the rules during my pregnancy," Linda said. "No alcohol or smoking. Fresh green, leafy vegetables four times a day. I even left the room if someone started to smoke...."

The same day that the doctor found the mass, Jonathan was sent to Hershey Medical Center.

The next few days were a blur of frequent blood tests, X-rays, a CAT scan, bone marrow tests, urine catheterization, and injection of radioactive dye to detect the extent of cancer.

To hold an active 9-month-old still for testing proved impossible until Linda, in desperation, climbed up on the examining table to nurse him.

"When you are in a hospital setting and away from every other parenting influence, you learn to focus on the needs of your child and listen to yourself.

"I learned how indispensable faith is," said Linda. She and her husband found the clergy supportive and used every avenue of prayer offered by friends, family, church, and the hospital.

"My husband is Catholic, I'm Episcopalian, and a friend Jewish

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Seize the moment and enjoy it fully is the philosophy of Linda Bruce who shares a funny moment with sons Jonathan, 5, and Christopher, 3. Jonathan, seated, had been diagnosed with a form of cancer when he was 9 months old. Now fully recovered, he is a symbol of hope that cancer can be cured.

Homestead Notes

Daffodil Days Aids Cancer Patients

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — The American Cancer Society recognizes the daffodil, as not only the first flower of spring, but the symbol of hope — hope that cancer can be cured in our lifetime. The Lancaster County Unit of the American Cancer Society will

hold Daffodil Days from March 22 through 27. Funds raised during this week will help provide transportation, medication, and nutritional supplements to the cancer patients in the county.

This year, a bunch of 10 daffodils can be purchased for a contribution of \$5. Spirit of Hope bouquets will also be available for \$10. The bouquets include five daffodils, with fern and baby's breath. Spirit of Hope Bouquets and orders of 25 or more bunches will be delivered on Wednesday,

March 23 to any worksite or location in Lancaster County.

The daffodils will be available at a variety of day-sale sites across the county, during daffodil week. Deadline to preorder daffodils is Friday, March 11. To find out day-sale site locations or to place orders, please contact the American Cancer Society at (717) 397-3744. For counties outside of the Lancaster area, check the phone directory for the local listing of the American Cancer Society.



Jonathan, right, and his brother Christopher share favorite playthings. Like typical brothers their behavior alternates between sibling loyalty and merciless teasing.



This Spirit of Hope bouquet is available for \$10 and will be delivered anywhere in the county on Daffodil Days. A bunch of daffodils will be sold for \$5.