

## *Our Reasons to Run: Lucas*

*Lucas's story*, as told by his Sister Lauren:

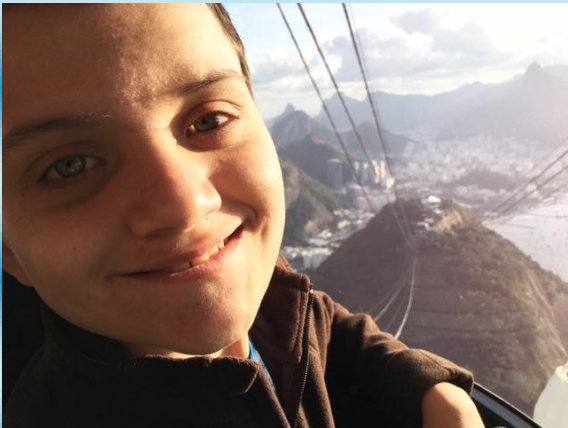
Lucas' journey began very early on. When he was only 18 months old, he was diagnosed with Rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare form of childhood cancer, which had formed a mass the size of a softball in the lining of his bladder. Luckily, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital was doing a study on this type of tumor and he was able to begin treatment

immediately in Memphis, Tennessee. A few surgeries, several courses of chemo and multiple rounds of radiation later, Lucas was declared to be in remission, having beat cancer like the fighter he was.



Fast forward 10 normal years with no signs that Lucas had ever been sick, except for a few scars and annual check-ups at St. Jude. Lucas woke up one morning with some leg pain, and within days it was pronounced that he had relapsed with a secondary tumor called Malignant Peripheral Nerve Sheath Tumor (MPNST). Despite this crushing news, Lucas never had a doubt that he couldn't beat this new illness. It was back to St. Jude, this time for a major operation that removed his bladder, prostate and rectum. He had to go through more months of chemo and radiation, and again he came out on top like a champion.

Three years later, while not unscathed, Lucas was living a pretty normal life. How many 15 year olds could say they beat cancer twice? Unfortunately, this toughest battle was just beginning. The 2017 new year brought the hardest news yet. Lucas was yet again diagnosed, this time with an extremely aggressive form of Leukemia. It was back to St. Jude for intensive chemotherapy and an incredibly risky bone marrow transplant. Through all of this, Lucas was incredible. Despite all odds, he made it through the transplant and was scheduled to finally come back home.



On the day of his last check up before being cleared to return home, Lucas received the most heartbreaking news of all. Despite the success of the transplant, the Leukemia had relapsed and there was nothing else to be done. His homecoming was not the happy moment it should have been. But even in the face of the worst possible news, Lucas managed to keep a smile on his face and put smiles on the faces of all the people around him. He

spent his last few months surrounded by his family and friends, eating Sour Patch Kids and pizza and continuing to be the warrior he always was.

To say that Lucas had one of the most incredible spirits of any person would be a vast understatement. His happiness and optimism were unwavering and completely infectious. No one could leave a room he was in without him putting a smile on their face. He never gave up his battle, and his last days he gained a beautiful wisdom, far beyond his years, that allowed him to face the next phase of his journey with the same courage he faced every obstacle that life threw at him. He touched the lives of so many people, and his legacy and strength will continue to live on for years to come.

***Help us f--k cancer by joining us Reason to Run 5K!***