Jeffrey Newbauer, Jr

In March of 2003, Jeffrey was home from his freshman year at the University of Toledo and was complaining of chest pains. Shortly after returning to school, x-rays indicated a very large mass in his chest which was originally suspected to be lymphoma. After an immediate visit to the Cleveland Clinic, Jeff was diagnosed in April, 2003 with Stage 4 - Aveolar Rhabdomyosarcoma. The results of this diagnosis tied back to the previous October when he was misdiagnosed with an unrelated, non-cancerous condition. The lapse in time as a result of this misdiagnosis cost Jeffrey valuable time as the cancer had already spread to his lymphatic system and bone marrow. He endured 9 months of chemo in 2003 and finally achieved remission in December 2003. We were all very hopeful that Jeffrey had beaten this disease. Unfortunately, his remission was short lived and since then, he has relapsed 3 additional times in April 2004, April 2005 and now again in May 2006. The cancer has spread throughout his body, riddling his lymphatic system, spine, arms and legs. He has endured various combinations of chemotherapy and radiation, and is currently undergoing an extremely aggressive chemo regimen which is his last resort of current medications. He is in tremendous pain and is struggling with the miserable effects of chemotherapy. The survival rates given his particular circumstances are bleak and Jeffrey is fully aware his time is very limited.

March 2006: Jeffrey with one of his little brothers Ross, expressing their attitude toward cancer!

Although the regimens he has endured have been rigorous, the side effects of the drugs sometimes unbearable and the prognosis grim, he has maintained an incredibly positive and upbeat attitude. Undergoing treatment at The Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital, he has had the opportunity to meet, inspire and be inspired by many young children who, like Jeffrey, are battling for their lives against varying types of cancer. Jeffrey enjoyed spending time with all the other cancer patients, most of them significantly younger the he. Always taking the time to watch a movie with his buddy Neal, age 7 or exchange favorite Band-Aids with little Gracie age 4, all while being infused with toxic chemicals. He really enjoyed bringing a little laughter and sunshine in other peoples lives.

He has participated in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life for the past four years and has been a top fundraiser, raising nearly $75,000 with his team of friends and family. He has consistently held a presence at this event as a spirited fighter and continued to amaze people with his outgoing personality and resilience when considering what he is being faced with. Jeffrey is also currently involved with CureSearch, a foundation created specifically for childhood-related cancer research. Childhood cancer research is grossly-under funded and receives little support from the other cancer related charities. Jeffrey believes it is so important to raise awareness and support for the children with cancer. He is facilitating their first annual walk in Cleveland this summer.

Jeffrey is 22 years old and a graduate of Twinsburg High School where he played football and baseball, and was active in choir. Jeffrey studied theater/lighting production at Kent State University and attended classes while undergoing chemo treatment. In addition to acting, Jeffrey enjoys watching and participating in sports, particularly baseball and football.

- The Newbauer Family

What is Rhabdomyosarcoma?

Childhood rhabdomyosarcoma is a soft tissue malignant tumor of skeletal muscle origin. This particular cancer accounts for approximately 3.5% of the cases of cancer among children under 14 years of age and 2% of the cases among adolescents and young adults 15 to 19 years of age. It is usually a curable disease in most children when the disease is discovered early and confined to a small area. More than 70% of children survive 5 years after the initial diagnosis. Relapses are uncommon after 5 years of disease-free survival. Relapses, however, are more common for patients who were originally diagnosed after the disease has spread (stage III or stage IV). The most common primary sites for rhabdomyosarcoma are the head and neck, the genitourinary tract, and the extremities. Other less common primary sites include the trunk, chest wall and the abdomen. The alveolar subtype is more aggressive tumor and is generally associated with significantly worse outcomes. Survival rates decrease significantly with each relapse.

The cause of rhabdomyosarcoma is unknown. It is a rare tumor with only several hundred new cases per year throughout the United States. Some children with certain birth defects are at increased risk, and some families have a gene mutation that elevates risk. However, the vast majority of children with rhabdomyosarcoma do not have any known risk factors.