

Austin's Impact Story

05/08/20



Mikayla's Miracle Story Continues

Here's a glimpse of why we feel this is a miracle story, how our sweet Mikayla is doing, and what may lie ahead.

Along this journey my awesome assistant Janet connected me with her sister who cofounded a brain cancer non-profit, the EndBrainCancer Initiative (EBCI). During the chaos, Mikayla and I, along with both sets of parents and a number of siblings met virtually with EBCI's Co-founder as well as their Clinical Research Nurse & Patient Referral Specialist. After weeks of devastating negatives, they provided hope and talked about clinical trials and second opinions. One day later we were given more negative news and hope was again removed from the picture.



(L to R) Palmer, Mikayla, Austin and Jones Neufeld

I stayed in touch with EBCI, providing the necessary files to them and to doctors as requested. As Mikayla's health deteriorated, we eventually reached a point where options were gone, and we prepared to say goodbye. At that point, we received a call from the personal assistant to Dr. Mitch Berger - a world renowned neurosurgeon from UC San Francisco (UCSF) and member of EBCI's Medical Advisory Board - to schedule an appointment. Dr. Berger provided a different prognosis, a different treatment, and a plan that would give her a chance to live. Hope was suddenly back in the picture.

Within days, we flew to San Francisco via private jet as it was too risky for us to travel via a commercial flight. By that evening Mikayla could no longer swallow, and she was becoming paralyzed on one side of her body. The very next day, Dr. Berger and his team removed one of the tumors completely and additional growth to provide room in the brain and alleviate many of her current symptoms. The surgeons called shortly after the operation and were positive with caveat that now we would wait to see how her body responded. The CT scans that evening came back good - no bleeding or issues.

Mikayla is currently recovering here at UC San Francisco though she hasn't bounced back from surgery as quick as we'd hoped. She's gaining more strength and cognition each day. As of today, she is able to talk a bit and move the right side of her body; still waiting for the left side of her body to wake up.

The level of care down here has been astounding! We have huge allies and many incredible people in Mikayla's corner. Dr. Berger is a total powerhouse and makes sure that his patients and their families are completely taken care of. Dr. Berger sent an irate email to the senior leadership of the hospital when he learned I wasn't allowed in; I now have an indefinite visitor pass. He called the Chairman of UW Medical Center. Dr. Berger and his case manager have also both called me and gave their personal phone numbers to call absolutely any time for any reason.

We are loving the level of care so much in San Francisco that we will continue with Dr. Berger's recommendations whether they are in San Francisco or back home. Most likely we will be here for another 2+ weeks so that Mikayla can do inpatient physical therapy and rehab. It is possible that we will be here for an additional month if Dr. Berger feels that Mikayla should have radiation and chemotherapy concurrently with PT and rehab. Typical standard of care for radiation is six weeks.

God is good and He is in control. Your prayers are making a difference. This is not a 30-minute sitcom - the journey is complicated and we are taking it one day at a time. Please pray for our children - Palmer and Jones. Pray for Mikayla and me. Pray for the extended family and friends that are stepping up every day in unheralded ways that keep the wheels on this wagon. We all need peace, grace, self-care and perspective through this journey. Pray for Dr. Berger's team and all the healthcare workers along the way that have got us to this point.

Thank you so much again for your continued support and prayers. People like you have allowed us to continue to say yes and get Mikayla the best care possible. We are feeling so blessed!

We continue to pray for a miracle and ask you to join us in that prayer. The toll on our family has already been unfathomable so we ask for continued prayer, good vibes and any positive energy to help us through this. Energy levels are low, emotions are high but we are still able to love on each other and find a normal for us. That is a huge miracle in and of itself. Thank you for your support, generosity, love, encouragement, prayers and well wishes. We often don't have the words or time to give a proper thank you but I hope you know we appreciate you and whatever big or small things you've done for us. Huge love from our family to yours!" - Austin Neufeld

To support the EndBrainCancer Initiative and their "Direct Connect" Program, please go to the: [EBCI Gift and Donation Page](#).

For more information about the EndBrainCancer Initiative and their important work, please see: www.endbraincancer.org