



Brighter Tomorrows
 An Outreach to Families Touched by
 Childhood Cancer
 P.O. Box 126
 Rochester, MN 55903
 BrighterTomorrowsHope.org

PRESORTED
 STANDARD
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 Rochester, MN
 Permit No. 492



THE BEACON



BRIGHTER TOMORROWS

Sherrie Decker

President

Mary Hansen

Secretary

Heather Wengert

Board Member

Paula Haraldson

Ronald McDonald House

Liaison

Sue Graff

Treasurer

Liz Canan

Board Member

Bruce Bonnicksen

Board Member



Register at
www.goforthegoldrochester.com
 for the Children's Race (ages 2-12)
 and have your photo taken with
 Slider from the
 Rochester Honkers on
 June 13, 2015!

The Mission of Brighter Tomorrows is to provide emotional, educational, and spiritual support by listening to, understanding, and supporting families touched by childhood cancer. Brighter Tomorrows is a Minnesota non-profit corporation supported entirely by charitable contributions and volunteer labor.

Brighter Tomorrows Newsletter

Issue 4
 Spring 2015

CONTENTS:

What Brighter Tomorrows Means to Me
 Page 2

Go For The Gold
 Page 3

Call for Volunteers!
 Page 3

Tomorrow's Chapter
 Page 3

Winter Family Retreat Fun!

Brighter Tomorrows was once again privileged to host its annual Winter Family Retreat from January 9 -11th on the beautiful properties of Ironwood Springs Ranch! Families enjoyed three days of relaxation, fun, and rejuvenation. It was definitely a time for having fun on the snow tubing hill, riding the horse and sleigh rides, enjoying painting with Art on the Go, watching movies in pajamas, sitting around the bonfire, all while forging new friendships. Carter (a cancer survivor) and his family were in attendance, and here is what they had to say:

This year's Winter Retreat was the first for our family! As a family, we were very excited to spend a weekend away from home at Ironwood Springs. We had heard so many great things about Brighter Tomorrows' retreat. The weekend blew away our expectations with nonstop activities that kept the kids entertained from snow tubing to board games. As parents, the weekend proved to be very rewarding as we forged new relationships with different families by sharing stories and experiences. The snow tubing was so much fun and Carter and Caden did not want to stop going up and down the hills. To see the smiles on all the children's faces during tubing was enough in itself to make the weekend. As important as the bonding and fun, the weekend also allowed Cindy and me as parents to recharge and refocus on being better parents and to spend quality time with our children. Thanks to Brighter Tomorrows and Ironwood Springs as it was a weekend that provided a lifetime of memories of joy.

- Cory and Cindy Simonson



What Brighter Tomorrows Means to Me...

Our baby girl, Scarlett Rose Tipton, was born on December 10th, 2013 after I went into preterm labor. Little did we know, something was wrong. Every time I pushed, her heart rate would drop and I ended up being placed on oxygen to keep us both alive. After a very difficult delivery, she came out not breathing and didn't for 3 minutes. Something was wrong. She was born with her left arm "10x the size of her right". We were transferred to a specialty hospital only 18 hours after birth.



Once there, many tests ensued. Subsequent surgeries and biopsies revealed a fatty tissue tumor that had begun growing on her back. After two months of trying to figure out what it was, surgeries to cut off the blood supply to the tumor, and finally extracting

the tumor, we were told it was cancer. It was revealed to be Undifferentiated High Grade Spindle Cell Sarcoma, a cancer of the connective tissue.

We did six rounds of chemo, blood tests, surgeries, but nothing was going to stop this cancer. The only way to make her "cancer free" was an extensive surgery. They needed to remove her arm, shoulder, clavicle, and scapula. On top of that, she needed the connective tissue and all the surrounding

skin removed as well. No one in California (where we lived) would do it. We went to four different surgeons and they all said no. Our only option was to travel to Minnesota to the Mayo Clinic.

While at Mayo we got all the answers we were looking for, and they agreed to do the surgery. This



was the scariest time of our lives. Scarlett was only in the operating room for three hours. She survived! And she was cancer free! We stayed in the intensive care unit for a week and then transferred to the regular children's floor of St. Marys.

While there, we had a wonderful nurse that suggested we attend a Brighter Tomorrows meeting at the Ronald McDonald House scheduled for that evening. And so we did! It was so wonderful to be able to meet with other families that were battling the same things we were. The support we felt was immeasurable and it felt like we were part of a secret club, no pitied looks, no "I'm so sorry for you" faces, just nods of understanding and knowledge of our pain. I wish we could have gone to another meeting, but after a month in Minnesota, we were able to go home. Our baby girl was on the mend.

We are now several months post amputation, we've completed two rounds of clean up chemo, and we are just focusing on physical therapy for now. In all, Scarlett has had 19 surgeries, four different lines placed, five rounds of chemo (21 weeks), countless blood draws, and almost 200 days in the hospital. We still have two more major surgeries to complete with her skin expansion, because the skin grafts she has now, will not grow with her. We are so close to crossing the finish line, but like those of you with survivors know, this isn't the end. Scans every three months, hitting that five year mark, after three years we have to start checking for leukemia, and for the rest of her life, checking for tumors. But for right now, we are cancer free. And we are living every day to its fullest. Thank you to Brighter Tomorrows for accepting us into your group and making us feel welcome. Our home away from home was much brighter with such wonderful people to help us along the way. – Simone & Mathew Tipton

Go For The Gold

June 13, 2015

3 Ways to Register:

1. Online at www.goforthegoldrochester.com
2. June 12, 2015 at Running Room from 5-7:00pm
3. Race Day beginning at 7 am

Prizes Include:

Raleigh Cadent Bike
Mini iPad
Running Room Gift Cards
Plus Much, Much More!

GO FOR THE GOLD
5k Run/3k Family Walk and Children's Races!

June 13, 2015
Silver Lake Pool NE, Rochester

100% of proceeds benefit Brighter Tomorrows, Inc.,
an outreach to families facing pediatric cancer!

Face Painting, Photo booth, Balloons, and Popcorn!



5k Run begins at 8:30 am
Certified Race Course and Chip-timed
New Techweave Race shirts for adults

3k Family Walk begins at 8:35 am
Stroller Friendly
Pets welcome if on leash

Awards Ceremony at 9:30 am
and hear from our honorary family members!

Children's Races begin at 10:30 am
Everyone wins a ribbon!
Race T-shirts
Cool Prize Drawings

Call for Volunteers!

Because of Brighter Tomorrows' continued success, we are expanding and developing new positions within the organization that will need to be filled with volunteers in the very near future. If you are interested in having your name added to this pool of applicants, we ask that you stop by our website (www.BrighterTomorrowsHope.org), fill out a Volunteer Application and Background Check Form, and submit it to us! We look forward to connecting with you.

Tomorrow's Chapter ~ Hope for Grieving Families



While Brighter Tomorrows supports all children battling cancer, we also pause to remember those who have lost this extremely difficult battle. In just the past several of months we mourn the loss of three phenomenal young men. Ian Keisacker, Nathan Artz, and Brody Hellendrung each bravely battled their cancers with perseverance and courage. While their physical presence will be missed by all of us, they will live on in our hearts forever. Brighter Tomorrows strives to serve



Ian



Nathan



Brody

families in each walk of this difficult journey and recognizes that the loss of a child is not where support should end. As a matter of fact it is a new chapter in life, it's Tomorrow's Chapter. These families will be welcomed with open arms as they begin the next phase of their journey.