

Peace be with you, (And also with you).

When I usually speak of Haley, the words become an endless melody in my head and heart and the thought of having to think about what to say today and how to say it, has been quite the challenge. So, I'll begin with the simple and most important words, and those are of our thanks.

THANK YOU'S

Randy, Rylea and I, along with our family would like to thank all of you for praying so hard for Haley and that her disease would finally be healed and her journey here on earth would not leave her scared or in pain. Haley is flying high today and each of you needs to know that each day of Haley's life, she prayed for her many friends up at the clinic fighting for their lives and waited until the very end to ask God to take her owies away. She truly was an amazing little girl.

We would like to thank her healer here on earth, Dr. Linda Shaffer. When Haley was diagnosed at the age of 9 months with Langerhan's Cell Histiocytosis, Dr. Shaffer gave us the hope that Haley would not die from the disease. As the months of failed treatments, turned into years, Dr. Shaffer's passion, focus and commitment to find a cure for Haley became a very large focus and stress of her life. Not a stress in the terms of burden, but stress in the terms of her love for Haley and the ache in her heart to find something for Haley that would work. We are so very thankful, to you, Linda, for the person God has encouraged you to be. Please know you did everything you could and we are indebted to you for the wonderful time we were able to love Haley. We know that you were supposed to be her doctor and what a blessing you have been.

Haley also had many nurses, child life specialists, doctors, technicians and even the line cook in the cafeteria, that held a special place for her in their hearts. There are too many to personally thank, because I know I would forget them, but I'll go ahead and try.

Haley's very first nurse was Bille. Billie is amazingly patient and soft spoken. She was perfect for Haley when she was so little and just getting used to the world of pokes and chemo. Billie helped Haley be confident and involved when getting her "button" accessed and empowered Haley to have control in her life. She also made it very hard for us at home to have REAL doctor stuff for Haley to play with. That is when Haley's doctor kit could have really saved a life and not just her crazy haired doll.

When Billie got pregnant and took time off, there was definitely some getting used to the "new nurse"! Catherine, oh Catherine, we didn't know if Haley would ever warm up to you. Haley would tell Catherine for months that the stool in the exam room was Billie's and not hers. It was so funny to see and hear this go on time after time, but Catherine just kept loving Haley and eventually one day, she told Catherine that was HER chair now. Thank you Catherine for giving joy to Haley and seeing her through some really hard times. You saw Haley grow the most, decline the most and finally achieve her wings.

And then this leads me to Cienna. I would say poor Cienna, only because, by the time Haley and Cienna became a team, Haley seemed to have already slipped away from us. Her disease progressed, her spirit at times was tired and the once little girl that ran into the clinic and was eager to get her tubie, would scream and cry upon walking into the doors. Cienna, our hearts go out to you for what you witnessed, but are so very thankful for how you took care of Haley and also Dr. Shaffer. You helped both of them during a time, that no other would have been more perfect for the job.

Haley had her favorites and I just know someone will be left out. Marian, Amy, Melissa, Brookie, Ernst, Lucky, Kimmi, Becky, Ashley, Laura, Jeanette, Elizabeth, Susan, Nick, Kellie, Claudia, Karen, Chaplain Jo, Chelsey, Jodie, Larry, Dr. Fernandez and Dr. Hagar and so many, many more.

I have had the privilege of being her mom during her short, but impactful life. She was a wise old soul that entered this earth with an obvious purpose and stood strong behind what God had planned for her. She was wise beyond her years, which made her short life, seem as if each day I sat with her, like a chance to see what she would be like just a little bit older than what she really was. I believe that was God's gift to me along with so many other lessons she taught me.

After Dierk died, I know when I speak for myself, I felt that somehow I was owed a "hall pass" of sorts to not every lose a child again or feel the depth of pain that I did. I had a wall that surrounded me, which kept me from being the best Christian, Wife, Daughter, Mother and person in society. I had a lot to learn from Haley's passion to survive and stay positive and it was at times hard to understand how she could still smile through so much pain. And I believe it was then, two years ago, when work became unimportant to what I needed to do, that I understood what the little things in life were all about and how when we live in the moment, life seems to stand still and your souls actually do the talking and not our human needs. It was then that I looked back and saw not only how I needed to be a better person, but how my attitude before could have been so different. I am most thankful to my daughter, my little warrior, my little prophet, that she helped me understand what is and isn't important.

When Haley's health started to not get any better and so many of you flocked to your aid, I created her caring bridge site. It was the best thing I ever did and I do believe in my heart it was a way for Haley to use me as a tool to reach out to all of you. There are reasons for each of our lives. There will always be pain in life when someone dies, but it is comforting to know, so many of you grew personally and spiritually from her life. As a parent, we all wonder who our child will become and how they will make a difference and Haley sure made a difference. Thanks be to God.

BEADS OF COURAGE

There is something I want to share with you about her courage, her fight, her love and her Heaven victory. These are her Beads of Courage. It really doesn't take beads to show me how courageous Haley was, but it was a symbol to her and an accomplishment to her that Chaplain Jo and she looked forward to. These beads symbolize each day of chemo, every transfusion, day in the hospital, each time we changed the very painful dressing on her head, every poke, every single procedure they did to her since January of this year. I didn't start the beads of courage when she was first diagnosed, because I really wanted to believe she would all be better, but when life changed on that 26th day of January, my goal for her, was to help her see that all the pain she felt was something to be proud of for being so brave.

AT THE END, HER BEGINNING:

While living in the hospital for more than 80% of this year, Haley met many wonderful children, whom she felt normal with and around. Haley made a connection with the big boy down the hall, Zach, an 18-year old that just melted her heart. Zach's dad wrote this poem for Haley,

No more morphine, no more pain
No more tests, nothing to gain
No more owees, no more tears
No more I.V's, no more fears
No more nights without sleep
No more cleanings that hurt so deep
No more temps, no blood pressure cuff,
God smiled and said 'My child, you have borne enough.'
Today, her legs are steady, her bones they are strong
Her hair is blonde and curly, her scalp nothing wrong
"Hey Dierk", she challenges him to a race,
The smile is beaming on her Papaws face,
When the day is over, into Jesus arms she will fall
Whisper in His ear, 'save the 'big boy' down the hall
Haley has mounted up with wings like an eagle
She will run and she will not be weary.

When Haley died, the Heaven's were so very present in the room. Her brother, her papaw and her beloved, faithful dog, Robby, were all standing side by side waiting for her for several days. Haley's fear of this next step were spoken by her to Randy and I and we did our best to ease those fears by walking her through the next journey, its beauty and how when she saw Heaven to just run and jump up into her papaws arms. And Haley did! The end of her life was hard to witness and her strength in every part of her body was absent for quite some time. Haley found the strength to squeeze Randy and mine hands, lift her arms up into the air and run her little legs physically in the bed and straight into Heaven. I can't tell you how much we needed to see and feel all her pain go away and she one more time trusted us and just run!

REFLECTION:

When you walk away from this day, please remember how our family wants you to remember the little things in your lives that cannot be bought by money, by a powerful job or by the car you drive. The little things are about spending time with one another, away from cell phones, tv's and all of life's other distraction. Once you understand the little things, then living in the moment becomes so easy to do and you might even understand what your purpose is in life. What truly you are supposed to do to make God proud. I pray I made God proud.

Thank you for loving our daughter and giving her such strength and for not just knocking on Heaven's door for 3 long years, but bringing in the Calvary! We love you all with all our hearts and are so very thankful for you being here.

I guess now would be the time to pass off the spotlight, to someone else, but it seems so hard to be done and not say so much more about Haley. I love you sweet Haley and please come visit me in my dreams once you get settled in, in Heaven!