

BUCKEYETH N

Champion & Angel Kids

2023-2024



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S

Champion Kid Maelée L. – Yellow Team



Maelee (center) with her sister and best friend

- Birthday: February 23
- Diagnosis: Clear cell carcinoma of the bladder

Maelée's journey started when she was only four months old. Tests revealed that Maelée had a mass at the base of her spine by her tailbone that was obstructing bowel and nerve function to her bladder. Maelée was diagnosed with a Neuroectodermal tumor, an extremely rare and aggressive cancer. Shortly after, Maelée's family was told to expect another brief couple rounds of chemo – which soon turned into 14 rounds over the course of over 42 weeks. Maelée struggled through many secondary viruses, infections, pain, suppressed appetite, nausea, and horrible diaper rashes.

Today, Maelée is cancer free! She is living, smiling proof that sometimes the biggest, most resilient of heroes are those of small children facing tough battles. Maelée loves playing doctor on her baby dolls, being outside (boating/swimming), and having dance parties with her sister. She also enjoys dogs and Disney princesses. She is an active and spunky little girl!

Champion Kid Aiden F. – Blue Team



- Birthday: June 9
- Diagnosis: Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (B-Cell)

When Aiden was two years old, the things he loved to do most, like run and play, became increasingly difficult for him. He suddenly began crying and limping when trying to stand up and walk. His parents immediately took him in for x-rays thinking it was a sprain. It was during this period that he was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. Throughout the years of treatment, Aiden learned to walk again, endured four surgeries, countless transfusions, countless rounds of chemo, and 20 Lumbar Puncture procedures. His treatment was long and extremely hard, but he was brave and strong! March 6, 2021, after 1,174 days of treatment, Aiden took his final dose of chemotherapy! Aiden wants to be a dinosaur when he grows up. He LOVES dinosaurs, Brutus, and Ohio State.

Champion Kid Corbin N. – Red Team



- Birthday: October 21
- Diagnosis: Stage III Neuroblastoma

Corbin was six months old when his parents noticed he had regression in leg movements. A pediatrician visit quickly turned into an emergency MRI at Nationwide Children's Hospital. The images revealed a massive tumor wrapped around his spine. The diagnosis was Stage 3 Neuroblastoma. Corbin endured four rounds of chemo, multiple surgeries, tests, scans, shots, and blood draws. The treatment process lasted six long months. Corbin has been cancer free since his first birthday, however, he still feels effects from his battle with cancer.

Corbin loves playing outside, riding his bike, driving his police car, and playing with his sister Lily. He wants to be a police officer when he's older. He is a sweet-hearted, silly kid with a bundle of energy!

Champion Kid La'Miya R. – Purple Team



- Birthday: July 8
- Diagnosis: Nephroblastoma (Wilm's tumor)

In April of 2019, when La'Miya was only 3 years old, her grandmother found a small lump on her stomach. She had an urgent appointment that became an immediate trip to Nationwide Children's Hospital for an ultrasound, MRI, and admission. Two days later it was confirmed that the lump was a malignant tumor that had engulfed almost 90% of her right kidney and the entire kidney had to be removed immediately. Two weeks after the surgery, La'Miya underwent 7 days of radiation and then 10 months of chemotherapy. To help explain what was going on with her body, her mom told her that she had a flower in her belly which was poisonous, and it had to be removed. On January 15, 2020, she received her final chemotherapy treatment and on January 24th, she got to ring the bell and tell the world she was cancer-free.

She now gets to enjoy elementary school, spends time with her little brother, and is living her life to the fullest! La'Miya loves to dance, play basketball, and practice gymnastics. She is very energetic, talkative, and always has a smile on her face!

Champion Kid Piper S. – Purple Team



- Birthday: March 27
- Diagnosis: Leukemia

Shortly after her third birthday, Piper began having fevers. After many tests, she was admitted to the infectious disease care unit for a week at Nationwide Children's Hospital and then released to the hematology department, where a bone marrow biopsy was performed. Piper was diagnosed with leukemia as she fought through a two-and-a-half-year treatment plan. She was declared cancer free when she was five years old. She is still regularly monitored but is doing well.

Piper loves unicorns, mermaids, horses and playing with her barbies. She loves dancing at the Silent Disco during the Dance Marathon, and she wants to be a veterinarian when she grows up! Although she may be shy at first, once you start talking to her you will quickly realize how kind and fun she is.

Champion Kid Josh W. – Black Team



- Birthday: March 21
- Diagnosis: Underdeveloped Intestinal Tract

Josh was born with an undeveloped intestinal tract. At 36 hours old he had the first of five surgeries to correct his anatomy. He spent the first 5 months of his life in the NICU. At 10 months old, he underwent a reconstructive surgery. At 13 months old, the doctors closed the colostomy he had been given during his first surgery. A few years later, he experienced some complications and had to undergo a second reconstructive surgery. Since then, he has been improving and remains healthy and active!

Josh loves playing lacrosse and basketball. He enjoys movie nights with his family, telling jokes and talking about Ohio State and sports. In the future he sees himself becoming a computer programmer.

Once he warms up, you will notice his sweet and charismatic personality.

Champion Kid Hayden L. – Black Team



- Birthday: July 4
- Diagnosis: Congenital Heart Block

Hayden was diagnosed with congenital heart disease when his mother was 20 weeks pregnant.

Hayden received his first pacemaker when he was four days old and spent the first 43 days of his life in the NICU at Nationwide Children's. Complications from the surgery led to lung damage. He has ongoing breathing issues and has since had additional pacemaker replacements. Through it all, Hayden's stayed a happy, cheerful kid who loves life and the hospital.

Hayden LOVES Harry Potter, especially playing Quidditch and reading the books. He enjoys playing Fortnite and spending time with his cousins, and he has his own YouTube channel! He is an energetic member of BuckeyeThon!

Champion Kid Brady S. – Green Team



- Birthday: January 8
- Diagnosis: High-risk Neuroblastoma

Brady was diagnosed with High-risk Neuroblastoma in October 2016. He had surgery to remove the tumor and to have his port placed. Afterwards, he went through 5 rounds of high-dose chemo, a stem cell transplant, 12 rounds of radiation, and 6 months of immunotherapy. Brady was able to finish treatment in May 2018!

Brady loves baseball, bowling, golf, and the beach. He wants to be a fireman or police officer when he grows up! He is shy at first but once he warms up, he will be running around playing games with everyone and his siblings, Ella, Roman and Nora.

Champion Kid Katelyn W. – Pink Team



- Birthday: February 9
- Diagnosis: Stage 4 Neuroblastoma

Katelyn was diagnosed with Neuroblastoma at just five years old. She had surgery to remove the tumor. This surgery caused her to have another emergency reconstructive surgery due to complications. Though very scary, Katelyn overcame this setback and quickly went back to her regularly scheduled cancer treatments. After several months of continued treatment, Katelyn was considered in remission, but needed vascular reconstructive surgery. Less than one year later, Katelyn's cancer relapsed. Katelyn continues to prove that she is a very strong girl. As of November 2023, her cancer relapsed again, and she is continuing treatment at Nationwide Children's Hospital. The staff is always happy to see her because of her positive attitude, sweet personality, and fancy accessories.

Champion Kid Neil T. – Green Team



- Birthday: March 24
- Diagnosis: Mixed Phenotype Acute Leukemia (MPAL)

Neil was diagnosed on January 11, 2019, after being sick for several weeks with what was thought to be a stubborn virus that would not go away. This diagnosis—a rare type of leukemia—was devastating to Neil and his family. When Neil learned his diagnosis, he was scared and surprised. He didn't know what would happen next. Throughout Neil's treatment, he has remained positive, although he has faced several rare side effects, including kidney and GI complications, red man syndrome, and he inexplicably lost the ability to walk early on in his fight. Neil is in maintenance now and he has started participating in "normal" activities again. Neil's mom, Kelly, says, "We are so lucky to live near such a fantastic facility and skilled physicians. We know that Neil is receiving the best treatment and that everyone involved in his care works hard to resolve issues and keep him healthy."

He enjoys spending time with friends, playing video games, and watching his favorite shows. Neil is an entertainer with a great sense of humor, laughing and joking with hospital staff every time he is admitted or is visiting the emergency room.

Champion Kid Pax F. – Orange Team



- Birthday: May 18
- Diagnosis: Neuroblastoma

Pax was diagnosed when he was two years old on December 23, 2013. After completing four cycles of chemotherapy, the doctors told Pax's family that the chemo was not working, and he would need surgery to remove the tumor. The surgery had complications and the recovery was difficult for Pax as he underwent another two cycles of chemo after the surgery. He has been cancer-free for over three years and now loves to stay active!

Pax loves watching movies, reading, spending time with his family, and playing outside. He loves all sports, especially soccer, baseball, and basketball! He is a big fan of dogs and his four-wheeler, as well. He is a ball of energy, especially around his brother Pace! You can always find he and his brothers, Pace and Pierce, wearing matching outfits at our BuckeyeThon events!

Angel Kid Liam V. – Yellow Team



Liam's family

- Birthday: August 1
- Diagnosis: Neuroblastoma (cancer)

Liam was diagnosed with Neuroblastoma in May 2015. He was treated at Nationwide Children's Hospital, where he went through chemotherapy, radiation, surgeries, blood transfusions, a stem cell transplant and immunotherapy. In January 2016, he was declared in remission but relapsed five months later. At the time, the tumor had spread to his brain and was untreatable. Liam gained his angel wings that same year in 2016. His parents and siblings, Quincy and Addison, have been with BuckeyeThon for many years to share Liam's story and keep his beautiful memory alive.

Liam loved Brutus and the Buckeyes. His family are huge Ohio State fans. Liam was a fun, loveable kid that always had a smile on his face; he spread laughter and joy everywhere he went; he was brave, strong and oh so handsome!

Angel Kid Jackson R. – Blue Team



Jackson's family

- Birthday: August 23
- Diagnosis: Infantile Cancer

Jackson was diagnosed with infantile cancer when he was just three months old. After a few months, he received a bone marrow transplant and was released three months after. He relapsed three months after his first birthday, and he leaned heavily on his T-cell donor. The following year, he lost his battle to cancer, one month after his second birthday. His parents and siblings, Eden and Sammy, enjoy being a part of BuckeyeThon and spreading awareness for Jackson!

Jackson was an incredibly happy boy who brought joy to everyone he met and even those who only knew of him. He never spoke a word, but in his two years on earth, he had more of a positive impact on those around him than most do in a lifetime.

Angel Kid Lauryn “Lu” O. – Orange Team



Lu's family

- Birthday: February 5
- Diagnosis: Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML)

Lu was diagnosed in December of 2014 with Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML). She went into remission after 4 rounds of chemotherapy in April of 2015, but relapsed in August of that year. On March 26, 2016, Lu received her bone marrow transplant, and this day was a miracle for her and her family. Lu fought so hard, and she continued to stay positive and strong through every challenge that came her way. After a transplant and many treatments, Lu's fragile body could not handle much more. On May 5, 2016, Lu passed away at the age of 17. Her parents and sister, Kristin, have been a part of our BuckeyeThon family for many years and host many of their events to continue raising money for Lu's Memorial Fund.

Lu had a passion for music, writing songs, playing her guitar, and she LOVED dogs. She had a warm and funny sense of humor but also a gentle spirit and contagious laugh.