

BUCKEYETHON

Champion & Angel Kids

2024-2025



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 Maelee 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 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 small children facing tough battles. Maelée and her older sister, Ella, love playing with her American girl dolls, swimming, biking, riding horses, playing softball and shopping. Her favorite foods are pizza, Panera broccoli cheddar soup in a bread bowl, and soft pretzels. She is an avid Girl Scout and an aspiring veterinarian. She is a social, intuitive, and spunky girl!

Champion Kid Aiden F. – Blue Team



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

When Aiden was two years old, he began 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 4 surgeries, countless transfusions and rounds of chemotherapy, and 20 Lumbar Puncture procedures. His treatment was long and extremely hard, but he was brave and strong! On March 6, 2021, after 1,174 days of treatment, Aiden took his final dose of chemotherapy!

Aiden is an active and energetic kid who loves baseball, swimming, basketball, and golf. His favorite animals are dogs and bearded dragons, and his favorite foods are steak and crabs. He also enjoys playing Roblox, riding rollercoasters, and eating steak and crabs. You can find him playing Gaga ball and dancing at our events throughout the year. When he grows up, he wants to go to OSU and be Brutus, then later become an engineer, specifically for roads and highways!

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 III 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 the effects from his battle with cancer.

Corbin loves riding his bike, swimming, playing baseball, having campfires, and playing with his little sister Lily. His favorite foods include ice cream, pizza, shrimp, and mac and cheese. You can always find him dominating in Gaga ball for most of the Dance Marathon. He either wants to be a police officer or a doctor when he is older and can be described as a sweet-hearted, silly kid with lots 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 was immediately taken 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 poisonous flower in her belly that had to be removed. On January 15th, 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.

La'Miya is an energetic, smiley, caring, and outgoing girl who loves to dance and practice gymnastics and cheerleading. In her free time, she likes to spend time with her family and friends, do hair and nails, and play Roblox. Her favorite foods are seafood, pizza, chicken and waffles. Her favorite Dance Marathon activities are the silent disco and gaga ball, and she wants to become a cosmetologist when she grows up!

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 and is still regularly monitored but doing well.

Piper is a compassionate and funny girl who is an avid and dedicated horseback rider. She loves to travel with her parents and do art, and her favorite foods are pizza and tacos. She loves all animals, especially horses and manatees. Her favorite Dance Marathon activity is the Silent Disco. When she grows up, she wants to be an equestrian coach for children! 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 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. He 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 Hospital. Complications from his surgery led to lung damage, and he has ongoing breathing issues and has since had additional pacemaker replacements. Through it all, Hayden has maintained a happy, cheerful kid who loves life and Nationwide Children's Hospital.

Hayden is a kind, funny, and compassionate kid who loves to play golf, bowling, chess, and video games. He enjoys spending time with his friends and his Instagram-famous dogs, Zucchini and Coco Bean (@zucchini_and_coco_bean). He is also in his school choir. His favorite foods are pizza, french fries, and pickles, and his favorite candy is Skittles. He loves to play gaga ball at the Dance Marathon, and when he grows up, he wants to be an elementary school teacher!

Champion Kid Brady S. – Green Team



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

Brady was diagnosed with High-risk Neuroblastoma in October of 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 finished his treatment in May of 2018!

Brady is an avid sports player and watcher, and he loves baseball, bowling, soccer, and basketball. He also enjoys playing video games, going to the beach, and spending time with his siblings, Roman, Ella, and Nora. His favorite foods are spaghetti, chicken wings, Hershey's and Cheez-Its, and his favorite animal is a cheetah. He is an energetic, fun, caring, and silly kid, and wants to be a police officer when he grows up!

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 her tumor, and the 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. Her cancer relapsed again in November 2023, and she is continuing treatment at Nationwide Children's Hospital. Katelyn continues to prove that she is a very strong girl and continues to persevere through her treatment.

Katelyn is extremely compassionate, radiant, and approaches everything with a positive mindset. She loves spending time with her sister, Kendall, swimming, riding in her blue golf cart, and going to church. She is always keeping up with the latest fashion trends. She also loves the song "Whatever it Takes" by Imagine Dragons as it reminds her to continue persevering through her treatment. In the future, she wants to become a labor and delivery nurse!

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 is 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 is a senior in high school who enjoys spending time with his friends, competing in marching band, doing theater, and playing video games. He loves dogs, Star Wars, mac and cheese, and Oreos. In the future, Neil wants to become a screenwriter. He is an empathetic, kind kid who loves helping other kids who are going through treatment.

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 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 playing baseball, basketball, doing art, and riding four-wheelers. His favorite foods are steak and fries, and his favorite candies are Nerd clusters and smarties. He loves cheetahs and dogs, and hopes to become a professional baseball player in the future. He is a quiet yet confident and humble kid. You can always find him and his energetic brothers, Pace and Pierce, together at BuckeyeThon events.

Champion Kid Braylee E. – Pink Team



- Birthday: December 21
- Diagnosis: Malignant Germ Cell Tumor

Braylee was admitted to Nationwide Children’s Hospital due to stomach pains that she was experiencing. She underwent an emergency exploratory procedure on the 4th floor of the hospital that diagnosed her with a malignant germ cell tumor. She was transferred to the 12th floor and underwent treatment. She finished treatment and rang the bell declaring she is cancer free in January of 2024! Throughout her time in the hospital, Braylee and her family greatly appreciated how all the hospital staff treated them like family.

Braylee is proof that even in the most difficult times, there are things to be happy about. Braylee has 3 brothers, Hayden, Logan, and Owen. She loves to dance, do art, listen to music, make jewelry, and spend time with her friends. Her favorite foods are Chick-Fil-A, Canes, and airhead extreme strips and her favorite animal is a dog. When she grows up, she wants to become a doctor. Braylee is incredibly upbeat, tenacious, outgoing, and compassionate.

Champion Kid Louis G. – Red Team



- Birthday: October 24
- Diagnosis: Neuroblastoma

On January 25, 2022, Louis was brought to Nationwide Children's for an MRI on the recommendation of his neurologist. He had trouble placing his right foot on the ground. The MRI revealed a large tumor on top of his left kidney. He was admitted to the Oncology Department for initial tests and was subsequently diagnosed with Neuroblastoma.

Louis underwent two biopsies, an MRI of his brain, implantation of a port below his collarbone and his first 3-day round of chemotherapy. Louis had an additional four rounds of chemotherapy, nine weeks of serial casting on both legs and a nine-hour surgery to remove his tumor and left kidney.

After completing treatment, doctors declared "no evidence of disease!" Louis never slowed down for chemo or any of his procedures. He would hop on his scooter or bike, even in his double-casted legs. He is an amazing example of how resilient children can be in the worst of circumstances. Louis has two older siblings, Maggie and Ethan, as well as 2 dogs and a cat. His favorite animal is a snake, and his favorite foods are chicken, lollipops, and M and M's. He loves swimming, gymnastics, playing video games, and going to trampoline parks. He is clever, thoughtful, polite, and compassionate.

Champion Kid Will N. – Green Team



- Birthday: May 13
- Diagnosis: Wilm's Tumor

Will was diagnosed with Wilms Tumor, a kind of kidney cancer, in the summer of 2020 after his parents noticed changes in his health. The diagnosis led to the removal of one of his kidneys, followed by radiation and chemotherapy. Will completed his treatments in February 2021, and although he still visits Nationwide Children's Hospital for check-ups, he is now thriving and living life to the fullest.

Will loves playing and watching sports, especially football and hockey. His love for sports became even more meaningful during his treatments, when he found inspiration in the Hockey Fights Cancer game. "They're fighting cancer like me!" he would say as he connected with the other kids battling the same fight. Will is a proud big brother to his little sister, Scarlet, and his family are huge Ohio State fans. Will can often be found playing, laughing, and bringing his infectious energy to those around him. He is a strong, kind-hearted kid with a love for life and a bright future ahead!

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 Addie, 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.