

Rudolphi five years cancer free



Reise Rudolph with his mother, father and sister. From this day forward Reise and his family would spend many days in the hospital fighting for his life as he battled leukemia. / SUBMITTED

By Sarah Sobanski

Reise Rudolph was born eight and a half weeks early with Down syndrome. The same day he was diagnosed with leukemia. 'One in every 10 Down syndrome babies are born with a form of leukemia called transient leukemia,' Reise's mother Roxane told *Bancroft This Week*. 'Sometimes it goes undetected. It always comes back later in life. My son's never went away.'

For the first four months of his life, Reise was kept in neonatal intensive care. Two weeks after his first birthday he began cancer treatment.

'They can't treat transient leukemia, they can only treat the symptoms' His morphed into acute myelogenous leukemia,' explained Roxane.

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, 'AML starts in abnormal myeloid stem cells and develops quickly.' It occurs more often in girls than boys. 'Over time, the leukemia cells crowd out normal blood cells so that they can't do their jobs.'

Reise's treatment meant many long trips to Kingston, sometimes as often as three times a week. At one point Reise's chemotherapy saw him develop an E. coli infection.

'The doctors were actually preparing us for Reise not to pull through, and then, of course, he's my little miracle boy.'

Today, Reise is five and a half years cancer free.

'Five years post [cancer] your risk is 25 per cent now instead of 50. He still will need to get checked every six months,' said Roxane.

He and his family participated in their first survivor walk at Bancroft's Relay for Life in 2012 'six months after he had completed treatment.

'It was absolutely amazing,' said Roxane, who's participated in fundraising walks across the country.

This year she and her family will be walking at Millennium Park as a member of Reise's Dream Team. As of Friday, June 2, the team had nine members and had raised \$1,800. It's the family's first team.

'It gives you a comforting feeling knowing that there's so many supporters out there,' said Roxane.

The Bancroft relay raised \$83,690 in 2016, around \$87,000 in 2015 and just over \$88,000 in 2014. In all, Relay for Life raised \$4.5 million across Ontario in 2016.

'When we were on active treatment the cancer society helped us with funding' It was a huge financial support,' said Roxane.

More than 202,000 new cases of cancer were diagnosed in 2016. Almost 80,000 people died from cancer. It's the leading cause of death in Canada.

Relay for Life happens overnight June 9 from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. If you didn't have time to sign up a team this year or donate but want to show your support, you can purchase and light a luminary at the relay. For more information visit

<http://convio.cancer.ca/site/TR/RelayForLife>.