

McKay was diagnosed with Stage 4, High Risk Neuroblastoma--a solid tumor cancer of the sympathetic nervous system--in February 2014 when he was just 3 years and 9 months old. His symptoms leading up to his diagnosis were not "screaming" cancer, but were common symptoms that could be brushed off as any childhood illness. However, when they were persistent, red flags started to rise. He battled Neuroblastoma for 17 months before he finally conquered cancer and obtained NED (No Evidence of Disease) status in July 2015. He was able to proceed forth with a 2 year trial drug that aimed at keeping the cancer in remission. He successfully finished that trial in November 2017, and was able to close that chapter and continue onward and upward with being a normal kid. Besides bi-lateral hearing loss caused from chemotherapy, McKay didn't have any other side effects from treatment. Fast forward a few years into February 2021, exactly 7 years to the weekend that McKay had originally been diagnosed with cancer, he had been experiencing some "red flag" symptoms the few weeks prior. Being 5 1/2 years NED, the chance of relapse at this stage was very, very small. Unfortunately, it happened, and at the age of 10 years and 9 months, McKay once again entered the arena of fighting for his life with a widespread relapse of Stage 4 Neuroblastoma. He fought relapse for 3 years and 1 month. While initial therapies were effective in killing the cancer, about 15 months into relapse therapy, disease progression started to happen, and they had to switch gears in therapy options, which led them out of state to try to additional trials therapies--which stopped the progression, and held the cancer stable for several months. In January 2023, they were unfortunate to find that the cancer had spread rapidly and widely, and all ground had been lost over the previous 2 years of treatments, having to essentially "start over", yet McKay's body and blood being taxed from the previous therapies already. In September 2023, he experienced another disease progression, that unfortunately left him unable to be eligible to participate in a clinical trial he had been waiting over a year to do. Since that time, he tried other therapies to hopefully reduce disease, but with each new therapy regimen and each new scan, the disease continued to progress. In February 2024, it was found that the disease, while already extensively in his bones and bone marrow, had spread to his liver, spleen, lungs, and additional areas of his skull, making it unsafe to continue any further therapy. He continued to do blood and platelet transfusions for a few weeks, knowing that that was what was keeping him alive at that point to enjoy the time he had left on this earth. When it no longer made sense to continue transfusions, he stopped, and passed away within a day, on March 17, 2024, after completing a 10 year and 1 month journey with neuroblastoma, just 7 weeks shy of his 14th birthday.