

May 2009

The Shannon Foundation  
Denver, Colorado 80202

Re: Jaden [REDACTED] - Retinoblastoma

To whom it may concern:

Pregnant with a baby boy! All we could do is wish that we have a beautiful healthy baby. August 22, 2008, there he was, 8 pounds - 2 ounces, ten fingers and toes. He's beautiful and healthy. Everything we could've asked for had just finally arrived and our family is now complete.

Four months pass and it's now January 14, 2009. On our way to visit a Pediatric Eye Surgeon for what we thought would turn out to be at the most "lazy-eye". When the specialist turned to us after examining our baby and asked us to sit, we automatically knew there was something more. Never in a million years would I have expected to be confronted with a parents worst fear. Those few words, "Your son has cancer and there's a chance he may lose his life. At the least he can lose both of his eyes." Jaden had been diagnosed with Bilateral Retinoblastoma. Not knowing anything about such a life threatening childhood cancer, I immediately scheduled a 2<sup>nd</sup> opinion for the following day at The Children's Hospital in Philadelphia. The diagnosis is definitely Bilateral Retinoblastoma. Jaden had multiple tumors in both of his eyes and could barely see. The tumors luckily did not yet reach his brain. If we did not catch this when we did my sweet happy dispositioned baby boy would not have made it to see his first birthday.

Jaden was able to get in immediately to Wills Eye Institute in Philadelphia on January 19 to see one of the greatest eye surgeons, Dr. Carol Shields. Following that appointment he began Chemotherapy treatments at The Children's Hospital on January 21 and 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009. Our lives had just drastically changed. Our four month old son has cancer and the chances at keeping both his beautiful blue eyes and being able to experience one of life's most precious gifts of Sight may be taken away from him. The chance of him being able to see his own mommy and daddy are 50/50. 'Innoculation'...there wasn't a worse word a parent would want or expect to hear. The doctors told us he would need six months of chemotherapy, cryotherapy, possible thermotherapy, laser photocoagulation and plaque radiotherapy, and there were NO guarantees.

March 2009, two treatments are over with and our son is responding very well to the treatments. Two days before heading back down to The Children's Hospital, we get a phone call from the hospital informing us that the insurance company will not cover the cost of the Carboplatin injections (chemotherapy) in his eyes and we would need to come up with \$1,000.00 per eye per each visit which he will need 3 visits. The insurance will only cover this medication to be administered intravenously and this step is necessary for the plan the doctors chose for my son. Not knowing what to do I pretty much lost it. My son is responding great to the chemotherapy...the tumors have shrunk and he has a chance at keeping his eye sight. What will we do?? How will we get this money to pay for it ourselves? If he doesn't get it and god forbid he takes a turn for the worse, how could I live with myself for not providing him with better?? I was a complete disaster for two days. Hours before we were scheduled to leave to take the trip to the Children's Hospital is when I got the call from our social worker stating that she found a foundation that helps with this type of situation and that they will be more than happy to pay for the injections. I couldn't even begin to explain what that did for us and my son. Overwhelmed with gratitude to just say the least. I didn't realize just how many resources there were for situations like ours. I thought to myself these people don't even know us and now they're coming forward and helping us get through this horrific time. I can't express to you what your generosity meant to our family!

Please except our sincere thank you and another thank you from our precious baby boy for helping with giving him the gift of sight!! Today with only two treatments left to go Jaden is able to see and he is presently keeping BOTH of his eyes. His eyesight is clear and he can see...the tumors are dormant and besides having another four years of follow-up visits making sure he remains cancer free...we couldn't ask for anything more!!

Thank you sincerely Shannon Foundation!!!

Laura [REDACTED]  
Jonathan [REDACTED]