



Line up for

L I A M

The battle had just begun. After recovering from surgery, Liam underwent 30 rounds of proton radiation and chemotherapy once a week. The radiation treatments were physically brutal on young Liam, but he completed those in May.

Liam started with a more intense, regular regimen of chemotherapy in June. Although he didn't experience the nausea and vomiting that so many do with chemo – "kids are resilient," Liz said – his blood count has suffered from the toxic treatments.

Now, Liam requires regular red blood cell and platelet transfusions to keep him healthy.

"I knew once he had the diagnosis that there was always a chance that we would need some type of product ... but I never really paid attention to those numbers before until we started chemo," Liz said. "Now I realize that blood and platelets are something that go hand in hand with chemo."

Liz donated in high school and college, and her husband, Barrett, frequently donates at the hospital where he works, but Liz didn't understand the everyday demand for blood until now.

"You just don't think about it," Liz said. "I didn't know the need was as great as it was."

Medulloblastomas are the most common cancerous brain tumors in children, according to the Mayo Clinic. About 500 children in the U.S. are diagnosed with one every year, many of whom will need blood transfusions.

"My son is A- and so he can only receive blood from someone with A- or O- blood," Liz said, her voice trailing off as the reality of a national blood shortage sinks in. "If people didn't donate and he can only have those two types of blood, I just think, what would happen?"

Now wearing the shoes she so often feared of wearing, the Webbs are hosting a weeklong in-center blood drive with Kentucky Blood Center, Sept. 26-30, at the Pikeville Donor Center on 472 S. Mayo Trail. KBC is the exclusive blood supplier to Pikeville Medical Center, where Liam receives many of his transfusions.

"If people don't donate and the shortage continues, children are at risk," Liz said. "Having this critical shortage is another obstacle that these children shouldn't have to face. If sharing our experience gets more people in the door, then I'm OK with that."

Between her husband's job as an ER doctor and her maternal instincts, Liz Razor-Webb has always tried to put herself in other people's shoes when it comes to parenting and protecting her children.

"I feel like whenever you see all these stories (of hardship)," Liz said, "I start thinking to myself, I don't even know what I would do if that was my kid, or how my kids would handle that."

Unfortunately, the Webb family found out.

The unthinkable became reality in February 2022 when 8-year-old Liam Webb from Pikeville, Kentucky, was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

Liam began experiencing symptoms in December with a fleeting headache and a brief bout with double vision while playing basketball. When the vision problems persisted, Liz called multiple ophthalmologists in the area before she could find an office that could see them on short notice. When Liam passed all the tests, an MRI was ordered and their fears were realized.

Liam was diagnosed with a medulloblastoma, a cancerous brain tumor that starts in the cerebellum.

Liam was immediately rushed to Pikeville Medical Center and then admitted to Cincinnati Children's Hospital later that night. The tumor resection left more residual tumor than doctors would have liked, but fortunately Liam made it through surgery with few deficits. Given the location of the tumor, Liam was at risk for speech, coordination and balance problems.