

The Story of Debbie DeGrie 2007 Fundraiser Recipient

In early December 2001, things couldn't have looked much brighter, for Debbie DeGrie, a young, bright, funny, pretty girl just starting a new chapter in her life. She had recently married husband Rodney and along with her son Brendan, the three moved to Perrysburg. Rodney and Debbie found they were pregnant with their first child together.

During her pregnancy, Debbie started having persistent headaches. Upon her mothers' insistence, Debbie went to the doctor. The doctor ordered a head CT scan and the results showed a large mass on her brain – cancer. After many tests and consultations with various doctors, it was determined that she should have brain surgery immediately to remove the mass.

January 8, 2002 the surgeons at Toledo Hospital performed a very risky brain surgery while Debbie was 23 weeks pregnant. The waiting room was overflowing with concerned family and friends. Debbie and baby came through the surgery even better than expected. A huge relief, until the biopsy results showed the cancer to be Mixed Oligo-Astrocytoma (mixed glioma), a rare and fatal form of brain cancer. They immediately contacted Cleveland Clinic to discuss treatment options.

In April, 2002 Debbie and Rodney were blessed with a perfectly healthy baby boy, Jacob. Immediately after Jacob's birth, Debbie started very aggressive chemotherapy and radiation treatments. For a year, she traveled weekly back and forth to Cleveland Clinic for treatments. She even continued to work as much as possible for her long time employer Maritz Marketing Research.

In May 2003, Debbie's cancer while still present had stopped progressing so she was given a break from treatment. Trying to settle back into their normal routines of family and work, Debbie and Rodney were surprised to find they were pregnant again. In January 2004, they gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Emily.

After Emily's birth, tests showed that the cancer was growing again and Debbie again started chemotherapy and radiation treatment. The treatment seemed to be working on the rapid growing cancer on her brain but the slow moving cancer started to spread to her brain stem. Debbie took a leave of absence from work and started even stronger experimental chemo and radiation treatments.

Debbie continued to travel to Cleveland Clinic and was receiving chemotherapy and physical therapy until December 2006 when she passed away, leaving behind loving husband Rodney, her three beautiful children; Brendan 7 ½, Jacob 4 ½, and Emily almost 3, family and friends, to mourn her untimely passing.

Before Debbie passed away, the Friends of Perrysburg had elected to have her and her family as the beneficiary of the annual fundraiser. Having lived with cancer for 4 years, Debbie was grateful for the support it gave her hope, she hadn't been forgotten. Debbie lives on in the hearts of her family and friends.



