

Brian

“The thing I love the most is that Valley Children’s lets them be a child. I have no words to express how thankful I am.”

-Patricia, Brian’s mom



Seven-year-old Brian’s energy lights up the room as soon as he enters. He has a hug and a smile ready for each new friend, and he bounces around playing with any toy he can get his hands on. At first glance, you would never know Brian once had cancer.

His mom, Patricia, didn’t notice a difference in Brian’s enthusiastic personality; instead, it was the low-grade fever and worsening tightness in his neck and back that prompted them to bring him to the Valley Children’s Emergency Department in June 2020. Once there, Brian was given antibiotics for treatment, but over the course of a week, he continued to get worse. Brian had pain on one side of his leg, then it would seemingly go away, only to begin in the other leg, causing him to limp.

When Brian didn’t improve, he returned to Valley Children’s where his family got the heart-wrenching diagnosis. Brian had stage four neuroblastoma, a rare, cancerous tumor that forms on nerve tissue. “You feel like the world just stops, and you’re in shock. You can’t believe you’re hearing those words, hearing your son has cancer,” says Patricia. His course of treatment began immediately at Valley Children’s.

Over the next 22 months of treatment, Brian’s oncology team walked Brian and his family through a rigorous care plan with the latest treatment options, and provided the knowledge to make decisions every step of the way. Demonstrating that good things come in small packages, Brian bravely fought through surgery to remove the tumor on his right adrenal gland, a bone marrow transplant, numerous MRI scans, rounds of chemotherapy, radiation and multiple other life-saving treatments.

Now happily back home in Tulare, Brian is enjoying getting back to being a kid. He wrestles with his cousins, plays with his friends and loves going to school (his favorite subject is math). Brian is truly a beacon of happiness, and his battle with cancer is a testament to his resiliency.

“We’ve been so grateful for all of the doctors and nurses at Valley Children’s. They’ve been so loving and caring, especially to Brian...and he has gotten so attached. I think he is the only patient who always wants to go visit his nurses and doctors,” says proud mom Patricia.