

# Find the hero in you.

## Meet David...

On March 10, 2017, 26-year-old David was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia, a type of blood cancer that adversely affected his white blood cell production.

Before the diagnosis, David was very active. He was a full-time Youth Minister, went to the gym five times a week and was in the midst of planning a wedding with his fiancé. That changed when unexplained bruising surfaced throughout his body, blood clots formed in his mouth, and extreme exhaustion drastically limited his activity.

After an initial diagnosis proved incorrect, his symptoms worsened resulting in more blood tests. He was called on the morning of March 10 and instructed to go immediately to the emergency room. He brushed off the notion that he might have leukemia, but went to the ER as instructed. Within two hours an oncologist told him that with 95% certainty David had leukemia. He was also told that had he not come to the hospital, he would likely only have three to four weeks to live. Instantly, his life was turned upside down.

Though the diagnosis was a shock, David soon became focused and found acceptance. Even understanding what cancer can do, he realized that he had already lived an amazing life and had checked off almost all of the items on his personal bucket list. He remembers thinking, "If an average life expectancy was 26 years old, I crushed it." With this acceptance, though, came determination. David felt he was given the diagnosis for a reason. Through it he would learn about life and patience and selflessness and joy and love. He was ready for his treatments and to start this new journey.

His treatment included a number of chemotherapy drugs. David experienced the usual side effects of nausea, fatigue and negative effects on his thought processes. However, he was pleased to find the effects were not as bad as he feared. His doctors discovered he had a genetic mutation that allowed his body to handle chemotherapy better than others. David stayed in the hospital until he was recovered, which lasted 35 days. It was a long and tedious stay, but he could remain positive because of this many friends, family members, co-workers and church members who frequently visited to play games, bring his favorite foods and keep some level of normalcy in his life. "I can't thank those people enough for their gift of joy, happiness, laughs and love."

Leukemia treatment is a long process and David still faces months of follow-up treatment before he can be considered "cured." Still, he feels positive about the outcome and determined as ever.

David acknowledges two groups of people who helped him battle cancer, and most importantly, stay alive. The first group is the incredible doctors and nurses who showed so

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much compassion, kindness and empathy. David appreciated how they treated him like a person, not merely a patient in a bed, by joking and laughing with him.

The second group was the red cell and platelet donors, who truly alleviated his pain. David needed nine red cell and 12 platelet transfusions. "These were strangers who literally gave me their life blood so that I could have a chance of survival; strangers who I can never personally thank for the gift of their time and blood," David shared. "It's just...awe-inspiring that they would do this for me, someone they do not even know."

David began his second round of chemotherapy in April 2017 with a hospital stay of just 7 days. Likely, he will need two more rounds of treatment lasting another five to six months. He knows that will mean even more red cell and platelet transfusions. He asks all current and potential blood donors to consider those in need, "I am only one of 30 oncology patients on this floor, so there are many people who need transfusions. Although you may not know who will receive your donation, know that your recipient will be greatly appreciative of your selfless gift. Thank you for helping those in need. May God bless you always and in all ways."

### Testimonial Summary

**Injury/Illness:** Acute Myeloid Leukemia

**Treatment:** Red Cell & Platelet Transfusions

**\*MAX Donor Match:** Power Red and Platelet Plus

Red Cell	Platelets	Plasma
9	12	0

\* MAX Donors give automated donations of specific blood components.



**United Blood Services**

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