



EVERY PENNY COUNTS

My name is Julie and Luke and Molly are my kids. Branden and I have been married for nearly fifteen years and Luke and Molly are our life. Luke is eleven and he's all boy. Like loves to play outside. He loves all sports. He is involved in basketball and archery and baseball. When he grows up, he wants to be a firefighter and a farmer. Not sure how that'll work but that's his goal. Molly is eight and she is full of personality. She is the star of the show wherever she goes whether there's a show or not. She loves to play with her American Girl dolls. You can see that I love dolls. She loves to make videos, put on shows, always be the center of attention. We came from England and went all the way to British. Luke had R-S-V as a baby and ended up in the hospital and so when his blood counts were low, they figured it was related to the R-S-V. We were sent to Children's so that they could look to see if he had leukemia, and everything came back fine, he didn't have leukemia, so we breathed a sigh of relief and a few days later got the call that actually he had M-B-S. It's just when you first get the news, it's like, you know, where do you start, what do you do, how is this going to end? He was in the hospital for about sixty to seventy days without leaving. And he was too young to really know the difference, he just didn't feel well. Julie stayed down at the hospital through treatment and I ran, I worked in Beckwith at the time. I didn't even come home. I'd go to work, you know, cause I had to keep working, so run to work and go right back down there. We stayed at the Ronald McDonald House. Day in and day out, that's all we did. It's tremendously difficult telling a parent that their child has to go through a bone marrow transplant because it's difficult to go through a bone marrow transplant. After Luke was diagnosed and went through treatment we found that new normal and we were told you can have more kids, it's not genetic, and Molly was born. Beautiful little girl. I had the doctor run blood tests right away to make sure she didn't have M-B-S and when she was born she didn't. And so it was a big sigh of relief that things were fine. But I could never really shake that, that gut feeling that something was wrong, even though she looked so healthy. Mom had that intuition that something was wrong and said Molly needs to be tested so yes, I was the one that said you're right, Molly also has it and needs a bone marrow transplant. My world stopped that day. Molly was Luke's little sister who was at day care when I was visiting Luke and I could not believe that they were going to be going down that same road that they had already traveled with Luke. When Luke found out that his sister had cancer, the same cancer, him and I did have the talk, you know, "Is my sister going to die?" and that's something you shouldn't ever have to do with a five-year-old. To go through something so difficult and then be told you have to do it again is extraordinary. And so the second time around we knew what to expect, so we knew what was coming, which didn't necessarily make it better. It takes at least a year to recover from it because we have to suppress the child's immune system so that they allow these foreign cells to grow. And then there can be lots of complications until then, particularly life-threatening infection. Less than probably one in three children would be cured without a bone marrow transplant. With a bone marrow transplant it's greater than eighty percent and that's all through research that has been a possibility to change the success rate so tremendously. Now that Luke is ten years post-transplant, his odds of his M-B-S coming back are pretty slim. Molly is past the five-year mark so her odds are going down every year. When you meet them, you'd never know what they've experienced. They're like my little role models. Pennies for Patients was one of the organizations that really helped us out when we needed help financially during the treatment. Every penny counts. Every penny goes towards funding research, giving hope and curing these children and everybody can make a difference. Everybody can give these children hope. Every penny counts.