



## Tyler's Story

### *Payton's Toy Box Helps 6-Year-Old Boy*

For a boy who loves to play Power Rangers and T-ball, news of neuroblastoma cancer can seem like the end of the world.

6-year-old Tyler Williams was diagnosed with stage four neuroblastoma cancer only two years ago in June 2011, after collapsing at a T-Ball game.

Neuroblastoma is a rare disease in which a solid tumor is formed by special nerve cells called neuroblasts. It occurs almost exclusively in infants and children and is slightly more common in boys than in girls. About 700 new cases of neuroblastoma are diagnosed each year in the United States. With treatment, many children with neuroblastoma have a good chance of surviving, according to the Kids Health website.

Immediately after being diagnosed, Tyler began treatment. He has received radiation, chemotherapy and three stem cell transplants, which have required extended stays in the hospital with his parents Jim and Lori Williams.

"Tyler has been so strong through all of this," Jim said. "He doesn't like being in the hospital. He often says that he misses home and playing outside with his older brother."

Payton's Toy Box took Tyler under their wing in August 2011, after he was diagnosed. The organization has taken Tyler and his family in and provided them with a television, Xbox, toys and a recliner in Tyler's hospital room. Payton's Toy Box has also hosted a fundraising event to raise money for Tyler's hospital expenses.



Each child in Payton's Toy Box is given a Friend of the Box. These are employees and volunteers who spend time with the child and his or her family. Volunteer Lance Johnson has been working with the Williams' family for more than a year.

"I have really enjoyed getting to know Tyler and his family on a deeper level," Johnson said. "As Friends of the Box, we find out what it is that the family really needs to help them through this process. We find out if they need money to cover expenses or toys, games and furniture to make the children and their families feel more at home while they are staying in the hospital for extended periods."

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Volunteers, employees and CEO Taylor Coney have been more than excited to work with Tyler's family during his hospitalization.

"Being told that your child has cancer can be an overwhelming and scary experience," Coney said. "Treatments and expenses can take a huge toll on the child and the family. We often hear that many families are feeling helpless, and that is where Payton's Toy Box really steps in to help pull them back up."

Tyler has been on the long road to recovery but has stayed strong throughout his fight. Though he has been staying in the hospital, Payton's Toy Box has allowed for him to go outside and play his favorite game, T-ball, with his brother and friends.

"I was so happy that I got to go play outside with my friends," Tyler said. "I really miss playing with them. It was super great."