



MAX PLOTKIN WAS DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER ON MAY 2, 2007, ONE DAY BEFORE HIS 4TH BIRTHDAY. EIGHT DAYS LATER, HIS FAMILY LEARNED THAT MAX'S CANCER WAS AN EXTREMELY RARE FORM OF B-CELL LYMPHOMA. IT WAS EVERY PARENT'S WORST NIGHTMARE.

BY LISA ROSE

Max's cancer was so rare that doctors at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) in Manhattan, one of the premier cancer treatment facilities in the world, had never seen it manifest that way before. To complicate matters, it wasn't a straight-forward case. The cancer had spread, and the oncologists were blunt. Without the proper immediate treatment, the consequences would be devastating.

"Hearing the news of Max's diagnosis was completely overwhelming," recalls Max's father, David Plotkin. "Never before had I felt so helpless and scared."

Through sheer determination, the Plotkin family moved forward. Max, courageous beyond his years, promised his parents, "I will be brave and do my best. I am strong."

Without delay, Max started a two-year protocol of intense chemotherapy at MSKCC, where he continues his care. In June 2007, the Plotkin family founded The Max Cure Fund for Pediatric Cancer Research at MSKCC in honor of Maxwell Grant Plotkin. The primary mission of The Max Cure Fund is to raise \$5 million to underwrite the establishment of a research laboratory entirely devoted to researching, treating and curing childhood cancers at MSKCC in the Department of Pediatrics.

"Ultimately, we hope to eradicate pediatric cancers," says Max's mother, Annemarie. "Until that is accomplished, we want to improve treatments, ease care and find cures."

The Max Cure Fund has already raised hundreds of thousands of dollars toward its goal. It has been honored by organizations including Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and the New York Rangers at Madison Square Garden.

"To be honored by MSKCC and the Rangers was incredible," says David. "We were humbled."

David Plotkin strenuously trained for and ran the New York City Marathon in November of 2007 and 2008 to fundraise for The Max Cure Fund. In 2008, at the age of 36 and only six weeks prior to the marathon, David suffered a heart attack. After receiving clearance from his cardiologist, he went ahead with his plans to run the marathon and completed all 26.2 miles. "I wanted to prove

LOVE TO THE MAX

A FAMILY GOES THE DISTANCE TO FIGHT B-CELL LYMPHOMA.

to Max and his younger brother, Alexander, that anything is possible through determination and perseverance."

In December 2008, the Plotkin family established The Max Cure Foundation, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to fund pediatric cancer causes. The foundation is also in honor of Maxwell Grant Plotkin—now 6 years old—who continues to bravely fight his cancer and inspire others to rise above adversity. The foundation's first benefit, the "Roar for a Cure" Carnival, was held in August in East Hampton, New York. The event was a huge success.

"Over 1,000 people attended, and over \$300,000 were raised," gushes David. "We couldn't have been more thrilled."

This November, David plans to run his third New York City Marathon, this time with his brother, to fundraise for The Max Cure Foundation.

"In 2007, I finished the New York City Marathon in six hours and 20 minutes. You have to love a race where you come in over 36,000th place and are still called 'a winner,'" David jokes. "In 2008, Max kiddingly asked if I could please run faster than last year—he had been waiting with my family on the sidelines a long time in the cold the year before! Despite my recent heart attack and tearing my IT bands in both legs during the race, I finished. In the 2009 NYC Marathon, I am hoping to not only finish faster than I have before, but to also raise more funds than we ever have before."

The Plotkin family—Max, David, Annemarie, younger brother Alexander and baby sister Ella—resides in Manhattan, not far from Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, where Max continues to receive care. In addition to helping to establish The Max Cure Foundation and The Max Cure Fund, Max's father has written and co-produced *The Journey*, an album of songs available on iTunes that is inspired by Max. David is also writing a book about his family's experiences battling cancer and developing a documentary titled *Max*.

Freelance writer and public relations consultant Lisa Rose resides in California with her husband and two young sons. She is dedicated to the fight against pediatric cancers and an avid supporter of The Max Cure Foundation.

DISCOVER MORE ABOUT THE MAX CURE FOUNDATION, THE MAX CURE FUND, AND HOW YOU CAN HELP AT WWW.THEMAXCUREFOUNDATION.ORG.

