

Our Story

On April 21, 2007 the world stopped. At least it did for us. That's how it feels when you get that horrible news. The sort of news that you thought would certainly never visit you in your life.

You hear about cancer everywhere you go. Even kids are familiar with it and what it is. At the age of 21 Ryan wasn't considered a "kid" but in reality most people say when you're 21...yes, you are still a kid. I was 18. I was the girlfriend of one year. I was still caught up in his big brown eyes, college preparation, and graduation. He was caught up in a new career of mechanics, camaros, and deer hunting. Then came cancer. WOW. That was the day the world stopped.

Surgery happened within days then came chemo. Our world had begun turning again, but instead of a steady pace it spun out of control in all directions. I declined my acceptance to Appalachian State University and Ryan started learning how to make surviving his career, his hobby, his life.

In 2008 Ryan finished up treatment, then came marriage, then came our daughter, Isabelle in the baby carriage. Ryan seemed to be doing pretty well, but Isabelle was born with a cleft lip. She had surgery at 6 months old. By the end of 2009 The cancer had returned. More chemo. In 2010 he endured a 13 hour surgery at Wake Forest. Recovery was grueling but Ryan was a superhero through it. After the surgery came more chemo. For a few months he seemed well again. Along with Christmas, at the end of 2010, came a new tumor and more surgery. Radiation began early in 2011. After that came more surgery for stent placement. That took 3 tries before it was successful.

A couple months passed and it was 2 weeks before Isabelle's 3rd birthday. The cancer returned again in one location. We did our best to celebrate our daughter's birthday but we were on a mission to figure out why this had yet again returned. We were at four and a half years now since his initial diagnosis. Many tests were done and we made plans to travel to MD Anderson in Houston, TX for clinical trial options. We made it there in early December. I had my 23rd birthday while we were there. In Houston they discovered spots in his liver, in his lung, on his ribs, in his groin etc. The cancer had spread drastically. It was devastating and to add to it, there were no clinical trials to benefit Ryan as he is allergic to the main drug that would be used for such experiments. We came back home and started chemo again. Sometime in between, we had a wonderful Christmas with our now 3 year old and said goodbye to the year of 2011. Just like every year since 2007 we were glad to see it go. Now it's 2012 and Ryan is still enduring treatments.

Soon more scans will be done to see if the chemo is working. This April will mark the 5th year since he was diagnosed with this appalling disease. He has fought with everything in him and will continue to do so. My nickname for him is Superman...because he is the definition of it.

Despite our hardship that goes so far beyond a written page, God has been good to us. We are so blessed to have each other and to have such amazing friends and family. Our story may be a difficult one, but God called us to it and has never left us to do any of it on our own. We are FOREVER grateful to the savior for his love.

Lorissa Coates

"And we know that all things work together for the good to them who love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28

