



MY HOPEKIDS JOURNEY: A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF THE BOWEN FAMILY

The Bowen family joined HopeKids in March 2015. Christopher is 7 with PAVMs -- abnormal communications between pulmonary arteries and veins. The journal entries below were written by Christopher's mom, Kaylene and are just a sample from the 39 events they have attended.

March 9, 2015: Our application was approved, and I registered for HopeKids today. Christopher is not in treatment, so we want to do as much as possible. I cried when I viewed the calendar because it's given me hope where I didn't really have it. I signed up for *Peter Rabbit*, KidMania, the Shrine Circus and the HopeFlick: *Home*. [Joining HopeKids] is opening up a world to my kids that I never thought I would be able to give them.



March 13, 2015: It was priceless to sit for an hour and half and watch my kid laugh at our first HopeKids event, *Peter Rabbit*. Christopher didn't worry about anything, and nothing was hurting him. I also met another HopeKids mom who understands my life.

March 20, 2015: I took the kids to KidMania with HopeKids. Christopher was NPO (cannot take food or liquids by mouth) so my other two played while I just sat and held him. We found out today that Christopher didn't qualify to get the lung transplant. While Alexis and Caleb yelled, "Mommy look, Mommy look," I held onto Christopher and prayed that this is not the last month with my son.

March 28, 2015: We received our HopeKids t-shirts in the mail. Christopher ripped open the package and started

handing out t-shirts: "Mommy, this is for you, and this is for Daddy. This is for Bubba, and this is for Lexi." It was like Christmas. We wore our shirts to the kids' first circus ever and I snapped the cutest picture.

May 31, 2015: Christopher loves baseball. It's the only sport he's been able to play. Before the 'kids night out' at the baseball game today, we met the players, played games and ate ice cream. The excitement wore on Christopher, and he took a nap from the third to the seventh innings but he was so excited to run the bases. In the car he said, "Mom, this is the best day ever."

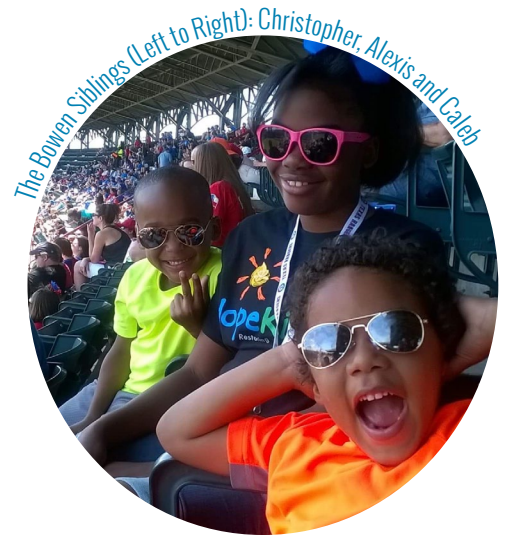
July 23, 2015: Christopher realized while roller skating that he wasn't the only one with a feeding tube, a bald head, a port, or wearing a mask. He opened up and felt comfortable because he was finally like everybody else. I can tell him 'it's okay to be different' but he wants to look like the kid to the left and the right of him. We want to identify with him, but we'll never understand. Tonight, he was comfortable in his own skin.

August 29, 2015: NFL tickets!! It's kind of like winning the lottery. Christopher bought a jersey to wear to the game with the \$63 he had saved. He slept some during the game, but I know he'll remember seeing the players on the field, meeting the mascot and taking pictures in front of the stadium. I don't think the people who donated the

tickets realize what it means to us. We would never be able to afford an NFL football game. I won't forget this one.

December 12, 2015: Everybody thought we were going for a nice dinner but I surprised them with the ballet. I call it "culturization". My family thinks I'm crazy and I made the word up. I told them, "Let's try it!" They actually liked the ballet.

March 5, 2016: We saw *Zootopia* today. My daughter knows that when we're wearing the HopeKids t-shirts, we're going to be doing something fun. Her favorite thing is the movies because they bring her peace and normalcy. They give her something to look forward to instead of being Mommy's helper and taking care of her baby brother. One day a month she gets to watch a movie and just be 12-year-old Alexis.



The Bowen Siblings (Left to Right): Christopher, Alexis and Caleb



- Taste of Dallas
- Dallas Roughnecks
- Frisco RoughRiders Foundation
- Helping on Horseback
- NOAH'S Event Venue - Las Colinas
- Texas Rangers
- Merlin's Magic Wand
- Good Shepherd Episcopal Church
- Minis and Friends North Texas
- Dallas Children's Theater
- Alamo Drafthouse Cinema
- McKinney Youth Theatre
- Artisan Center Theater
- Kids Who Care
- American Heart Association
- AT&T Performing Arts Center
- Southlake Gymnastics Academy
- Live Nation - Dallas
- Sports Marketing Monterrey
- ArtReach Dallas
- TopGolf The Colony
- Jumpstreet Colleyville
- Great Southwest Collegiate League
- Frisco Youth Theatre
- Bureau of Engraving and Printing
- Thunderbird Roller Rink
- Christ's Angels Leaving Everlasting Blessings, Inc.
- Taste Buds Kitchen
- LifeStage Theatre at LifeSong Studio

NORTH TEXAS HOPE DAY MILESTONES



"Thank you for that wonderful family event. For the one day we forgot all about all the doctor appointments and stress of medications and got to just enjoy being a family. Thank you helping us make happy family memories."



June and July included several program milestones for HopeKids North Texas. Above (Left to Right): The Bahar family enjoy the largest private HopeKids North Texas event to date at the Keller Pointe water park; Jeffrey and his dad enjoy a day together at Keller Pointe. Left (Top to Bottom): HopeKids North Texas hosted the first HopeCommunity events including a parent dinner for families who lost a child and HopeKids families serving dinner at Ronald McDonald house



NORTH TEXAS HOPE DAY PROGRAM



Left: Cooking class at Taste Buds Kitchen.

Below (Left to Right): HopeKid Dominic and his mom, Marie, take a selfie with Roughneck players after the game; Stephanie and her daughter, Baylee, at a Texas Rangers game; Employees from JMEG and their families volunteer at TopGolf; Abby enjoys the gymnastics clinic.



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