

Diamond's Story

October 24, 2011

I am eight years old and I have cancer and an aggressor form of brain tumor called Anaplastic Ependymomas. I am writing to you to ask for your help. This is my story.

In November 2009 my mom, brother, and I moved to Jacksonville, Florida. For a while we stayed in a hotel but then the bills were too much. Soon my mom had no more money and we were homeless. For the next year we were homeless and lived in different shelters like the Sulzbacher Homeless Shelter and Trinity Rescue Mission. My mom who is educated and super smart finally got a job and we were able to move into a small apartment. I was doing well in school and liked learning about everything. Science is my best subject in class. I love being adventurous and learning about the earth.

Unfortunately my mom lost her job and soon afterward we were homeless again. It was very scary, we didn't know where we were going to sleep or eat. My mom was trying hard to find a job but no one seemed to care or could help us. Then one day we were sharing a sandwich in front of Publix waiting for my brother to finish school and God sent a blessing to us. A nice lady, Mrs. Stephanie, came out of Publix and saw us sitting there. It was raining really hard. She asked us if we needed a ride. My mom said yes. My mom told her to take us to the public library near my brother's school as we had no place to go. Mrs. Stephanie asked where we lived and my mom sadly told her we were homeless. She was very sad and said "well tonight you are not homeless, you're staying with me and my family". That night we stayed with her, her husband Dr. Scott and two kids. It was so much fun and I felt safe. We had spaghetti for dinner and ate like a family.

The next day she and my mom started making a plan to find us a place to live. Soon we moved into an apartment and my mom was

attending beauty school. My mom got a scholarship to beauty school for a 3-month program and then she could get a good job. Due to the kind generosity of people, we were able to get our rent paid for 6 months in advance. My mom said the plan she and Mrs. Stephanie made was for her to go to school and then start working, and by the time she had to pay rent in the end of October everything would be okay.

Everything was so perfect. My brother and I actually had our own bedroom which we would share, although sometimes I like to sleep with my mom. People kindly gave us nice furniture and a TV. Everything was so nice, better than I've known in a long time. My mom was so happy and excited to finish school and get a job.

Then in May, not long after we started our new life, I started getting very sick. At first my mom and the Doctor's thought it was the flu. Then one morning I woke up and couldn't move my right hand. My mom called Mrs. Stephanie and we rushed to the emergency room. After different tests I found out I had a mass in my brain. Later I found out I have a brain tumor and cancer.

I went through brain surgery and just finished 6 weeks of proton therapy and radiation treatments a few days ago, October 21st. My mom gave me a small party to celebrate. I hope I don't need more treatments. This has been scary for me and very hard for my mom since May.

Now it is almost the end of November and we will need to start paying rent, but my mom couldn't get a job and we have no money. My mom only gets \$300 per month. Soon without help we will be homeless. My mom has called city officials so many times for help but nothing. This is why I am asking you for help.

We need to find a place to live, which my mom can afford. Because of my cancer my mom is scared and has not been able to finish school or get a job. We need help.

I know my cancer is serious. I am only eight years old, scared and afraid to have nowhere to go and no safe place to sleep. Can you help us?

God bless

Diamond

PS My mom helped me with this letter. I have been through so much and slowly feeling better and getting stronger.