

# THE

# Josiah Garcia

# FAMILY

When a parent is struggling to understand why her child is sick, the unknown can be frightening. “It was in July when Josiah first started complaining of headaches and nosebleeds,” shares mother Erika Garcia. “He was sleeping almost 18 hours a day and having trouble doing his normal routine.”

After some initial testing at an area hospital, Josiah was transferred to Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital where he and his mom started to get answers. A CAT scan revealed that Josiah had an enlarged spleen, and another test revealed that he had 750,000 infected white blood cells. Erika’s worst fears were realized when Josiah’s doctor confirmed that the diagnosis was T-cell ALL—a type of leukemia—and estimated that he only had two weeks to live.

“Before I knew it, a care team was assembled, and Josiah’s treatment plan was being explained to me,” says Erika. “It was so fast, and they were so thorough—I knew that they were on our case. They even called off-duty doctors to come in and work with us,” she adds.

At Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital, children diagnosed with cancer automatically become Four Diamonds kids if they live in Pennsylvania. “I remember when our Four Diamonds social worker, Aubrey, first explained Four Diamonds to me. I couldn’t believe that they would pay for all of our uninsured medical bills. And when I found out that we were eligible for financial assistance after I lost my job—wow, it was a huge help,” says Erika.



By providing comprehensive support to families like the Garcias, Four Diamonds allows parents to focus on the wellbeing of their child, rather than paperwork, bills, and the anxiety of navigating their experience alone. Four Diamonds makes sixteen specialty care providers available to families, as well as a team of medical experts and physician-scientists who are committed to childhood cancer care and research.

“I’m a single mom. Before, it was just me and Josiah, but thanks to Four Diamonds, we have a huge adopted family,” shares Erika. She even recalls a time when her own health needs were met by the team. “I got a call at work one day to come to the hospital. When I arrived, Aubrey was waiting for me in the lobby—Josiah was having seizures. Before she took me up to his hospital room, she made sure that I had something to eat and drink, and that all of my questions were answered. It was like she was my own personal counselor,” she says.

Today, Josiah is beating the odds. He’s outlived the doctor’s original prediction by 8 months and is getting stronger each day. Chemotherapy treatments are a regular part of Josiah and Erika’s life now, but thanks to Four Diamonds, they are not alone.

“I know that everyone at the hospital cares about us. From the care providers to the other Four Diamonds families, we’ve got an incredible team around us,” she says.