

November 8, 2013

Dear Friends of the Restoring Hope Transplant House,

My brother, Jim Piper, was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia in May of 2013. After his first round of chemo and subsequent weeks in ICU it became clear that the only choice for his survival would be a bone marrow transplant.

And so began our journey.

Jim's best chance of surviving a bone marrow transplant was with a sibling donor but the idea of Jim having full siblings never seemed possible. Jim was adopted at six weeks old and all we knew of his birth parents was that they had been in their teens and were unwed.



I began searching for them right away. I knew Jim's birth date and county of birth, and I knew that his mother had chosen the type of home he should go to. She wanted a middle class, loving, protestant home with siblings, and preferably one with music in the home. She even chose the outfit he should wear when he came to us, so we knew there was some real care taken. With the help of the Alma Society I was able to find Jim's birth family and I made contact with them on June 22nd.

I spoke with Jim's birth parents, Allan and Sharon. Their reaction was one of joy and concern. I found out that they had wanted to marry and keep Jim but since they were teens they were made to give him up. Years later, they married and had more children. Jim had a full brother and sister! They quickly decided to tell their children about Jim's existence and illness.

They met with Jim's sister, Heather, the Monday after we first spoke. She was told she had an older brother and told that she might have a chance to save his life. Heather agreed to be tested as a possible donor immediately. We waited for weeks, and then got the results that she was an identical match. She agreed to be his donor!



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The rest of the story.

As soon as Jim was diagnosed in May, our family, in shifts at first, and finally our parents, relocated to Wisconsin from California. Mom and dad have been caring for



Jim for six months in a very isolated situation. As soon as we moved them all into the Transplant House things began to change. The Herbst family brought much-needed friendship and care to the family. Others in the house shared their stories. For the first time we realized that we weren't all alone in this. Some of the fear dissipated.

The Transplant House was a wonderful place for Jim to spend time and get to know his new family.

During the course of treatment, Jim's birth mom and sister each made two trips to Wisconsin and were greeted as family by all. So much healing has taken place there.

During the darkest days of the transplant, our mom and dad had a warm, safe place to go and rest. They were encouraged every step of the way. Pots of soup, blankets, snacks and water for long days at the hospital were shared with the love of a family.

As we have moved past the crisis time, my family has begun to encourage others who are coming to the Transplant House. The Restoring Hope Transplant House is a beautiful gift that the Herbst Family and the many donors have given to all of us. We are grateful beyond measure.

With much love and gratitude,

Julie (Piper) Adams