



LEENA'S STORY

NAME: LEENA

AGE: 3

ILLNESS: CANCER

PRESCRIPTION:

to go to my favourite
theme park



Three-year-old Leena is a lively little girl who loves to sing and enjoys playing make believe with her Mommy and Daddy. Her name, meaning "young palm tree," was inspired by warm climates, sunshine, palm trees and beaches – which her parents associate with paradise.

While full of spirit, Leena has experienced many health challenges, as she has been bravely facing stage 4 cancer for over half her young life. She became ill at just 19 months old, and her parents thought she had contracted norovirus from daycare. After a few trips to the family doctor, they made a visit to their local children's hospital and did not return home that night. Instead, Leena was admitted and began her year-and-a-half long treatment journey, consisting of five rounds of chemotherapy, twelve rounds of radiation, eight rounds of immunotherapy, surgery, stem cell transplants and more.

"Instead of taking our daughter to birthday parties, park playdates and exploring the world making memories, we were [...] living a very isolated life because treatment made her immunocompromised. We never imagined this is what our life would look like," Leena's family recalled.

While it was challenging to keep a positive outlook, when Leena was diagnosed, a close friend of the family shared a positive thought with them: "During a hurricane, the palm tree will bend until it's parallel to the ground. And when the storm passes, it will rise back up until it's standing tall. The palm tree is the epitome of resilience. She is going to get through this storm, your little palm tree." Leena's parents often re-read this quote to get through the hardest times, and with every hospital admission, drew a palm tree on the window of their room, looking towards it for brighter days.

Now, free from IV machines and tubes, Leena is healthier and happier than ever and enjoyed a recent wish trip to her favourite theme park with her family. Meeting her favourite princess with long locks of hair, whom Leena affectionately calls, 'Punzie,' and receiving her very own princess wig was a moment of pure joy. Leena twirled and sang with the other princesses and gave a hug to her favourite mouse.

"Watching Leena get to experience such immense joy in her life healed a part of us," shared her family. "These memories are priceless for us and truly give us a sense of hope and happiness. She is forever our resilient palm."