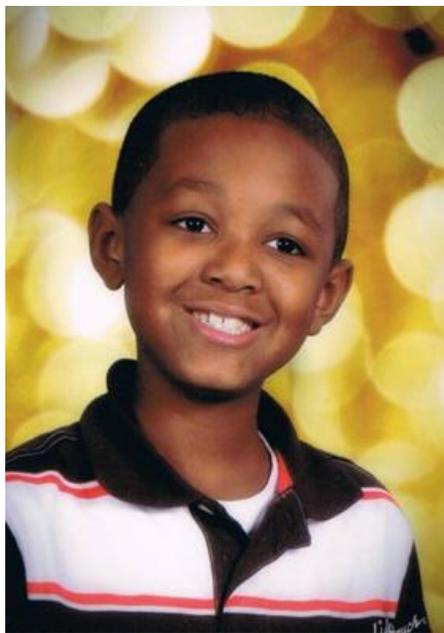




# Bright Light Foundation

## Roderick Christian

*2013 BLF Recipient*



At the end of summer 2011 Roderick was complaining about pain in his right foot. He told us he hurt his foot playing basketball at summer camp. We took Roderick to his pediatrician and it was discovered Roderick had a hairline fracture in his right foot. After receiving a boot on his foot he was sent home and a few days later we noticed a huge lump on his right thigh that was warm and causing him pain. We were referred to the Children's Hospital in New Orleans for more tests. On August 24, 2011 they diagnosed our 7 year old with Metastatic Osteosarcoma, a form of bone cancer. At the time of his diagnosis he already had cancer in both lungs and his right femur. We were transferred to Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, Texas to begin his 30 week treatment plan. Roderick had to be admitted for all of treatments at Texas Children's which caused us

to have many long hospital stays and travel.

After 2 cycles of chemotherapy treatments to decrease the tumor in his right thigh a surgery was scheduled. This surgery was called Limb Salvage. This surgery was to remove the tumor in his right leg as well as his entire femur bone. During surgery Roderick received a total knee replacement and the surgeon implanted a metal rod with growth ability to allow him to walk on his own and to have the ability to be lengthened as he grows. Roderick went through intensive physical therapy to learn how to walk again. Roderick walked on his own without support in February 2012.

At the end of December 2011 and February 2012 Roderick underwent a thoracotomy surgery to remove lesions off his right and left lung. During each time of surgery about 25% was removed off each lung that was affected by cancer. Roderick ended treatment on May 12, 2012 and scans showed that he was free from any new lesions.



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We were so thankful and grateful to God for Roderick's healing, but that has short lived. On, November 13, 2012 new scans showed that lesions had reappeared on both lungs. He was only in remission for 6 months. We were heartbroken for our son because he endured so much, but we knew Roderick's positive attitude and God's grace would help us to persevere again. Roderick was treated with a stronger chemotherapy and the individualized treatment plan was to last 18 weeks. Roderick underwent another thoracotomy on January 4, 2013 on his right lung to remove lesions and the surgery was a success. He had his last chemotherapy treatment March 24, 2013.

Roderick had his third thoracotomy. In April 2013 Roderick's scans showed that the lesions on his left lung had no changes so a surgery was scheduled for May 8, 2013 to put him remission but after surgery Roderick's suffered complications that put him in Pediatric ICU. Upon being released from the PICU to a regular room Roderick was suffering with excruciating headaches. On May 13, 2013 a CT of his head was ordered and it was discovered that Roderick had metastasis to the brain. After the team of doctors met it was decided that there was nothing else medically they could do but to prolong life with radiation treatment to the brain. We told Roderick about the new diagnosis and he said he wasn't going back to hospital for any more chemo or surgeries because God said he would be healed. We were devastated to know that we possibly had to say goodbye to our son one day. After finding this out we decided to take him home and allow him to live out his dreams. Roderick's dream was to become a chef and open his own restaurant called the Christian Café. We got with a local restaurant owner and decided to let him live out his dream by letting us do a restaurant opening ceremony to fulfill his wishes in which he would be the honorary chef in his own restaurant on June 8, 2013. But on the morning of May 31, 2013 Roderick woke up and told me Mommy my head hurts. We called the doctors in Houston and they told us to bring him in. After getting dressed Roderick lost mobility to the left side of his body. We called the ambulance and they came and took him to the local hospital before going to Houston to make sure it safe to transport him. While in the local hospital Roderick had seizures the doctors were able to get them under control with medication. Once stable the ambulance immediately transported him to Houston. When we arrived in Houston he was put on the breathing machine. More tests came back that showed that our baby boy was brain was dying. On the morning on June 1, 2013 at 9am we decided to give Mighty Roderick his wish to no longer go through surgery, treatment,



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endure the hospital no longer. He was removed from the ventilator and passed at 11:15am in the arms of his parents knowing that they were letting go one of the most precious gifts life could unfold.

Roderick's joyful smile would brighten up the room and making his battle with cancer easier to bare. Roderick believed in God for his healing and throughout his treatment he always remained positive about life and worked diligently as a student. He was able to pass the ILEAP, make honor roll, and accomplish his accelerated reader goal each 9 weeks. He underwent about 10 surgeries in 2 years, numerous blood transfusions, over 30 hospital admissions, countless doctors visit to and from Houston and he smiled each day and gave his all to get better. He spent a lot of time in the kitchen cooking with his parents. He enjoyed telling jokes, hanging out with his friends, and watching the food network channel. Roderick was a very compassionate and kind to everyone. He would always extend a hand to help at home, school, and church.

Roderick was a kid of courageous spirit, industrious ability, a positive attitude, and a contagious smile. Our son left a legacy to his parents, friends, teachers, and family that the power of a positive attitude can help you conquer the biggest mountains in life. Our Mighty Roderick will be forever missed, loved, and appreciated for his fight to never quit during the time of trouble and how you can smile your way through.