

**Roberta Silbert, MPH**  
155 White Birch Drive, Gullford CT 06437  
203 453- 5966

March 17, 2014

Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

Re: SB – 443 An Act Concerning Pesticides On School Grounds, Parks, Playgrounds, Athletic Fields And Municipal Greens.

I am submitting testimony in support of SB 443 because I consider the health of our children and the health of our environment to be critical to the great State of Connecticut.

When tragedy strikes we pay attention. We are glued to our electronic devices in disbelief. Then there are the less public tragedies like a mother taking her young child with leukemia to the hospital for chemotherapy, the high school athlete about to start college just diagnosed with lymphoma, a baby born with birth defects, or the parents helping their child adjust to life with severe asthma. I have worked in the health care field for many years and I know of the suffering that illness and disease can cause.

While we all try to keep our children safe they are being involuntarily exposed to toxic chemicals like pesticides that can harm them. PESTICIDES KILL LIVING THINGS LIKE PLANTS AND INSECTS. OUR CHILDREN ARE ALSO LIVING THINGS. If children fell ill or fell dead onto the grass of a pesticide maintained athletic field after a game of soccer or your dog died right after walking on a pesticide sprayed town green people would be paying a lot of attention AND there would be a lot of press coverage. But illness from these toxins is a less public and less publicized tragedy. And the time from exposure to diagnosis of illness can be as long 20 years.

This much is clear – CHILDREN AND PESTICIDES DON'T MIX. And as with many things there is the good, the bad and the ugly.

First the good news. Connecticut legislators by an overwhelming majority passed landmark legislation to protect children by a ban on lawn pesticides in public and private schools from day care to through grade 8. Now hundreds of thousands of children are protected from involuntary exposure on school grounds.

Now the bad news. Most parents do not even know that this law exists because they are not paying attention to the causes of the everyday tragedies that are affecting others people's children. The bad news is that the pro-pesticide interests have blocked the ban being extended to other places where children play. We need the ban extended to ALL other places where our children play. It makes no sense to protect children's health on school grounds up to 8<sup>th</sup> grade and expose them in parks, playgrounds, on municipal fields, high school fields,

and on town greens. I can tell you this: when illness and disease strike it doesn't care what grade you are in, or your age, or your economic status.

The ugly news is that the billion dollar pesticide industry wants to protect their market share on the backs of our children and our environment. Pro-pesticide interests claim that non-toxic turf care does not work and are trying to reverse the ban and permit the use of all their toxic pesticides. They do this under the guise of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) that sounds nice but really means business as usual. IPM is a subterfuge to allow the full use of toxic lawn pesticides. IPM is flawed and puts our children at risk. The ban is stricter and protects children from toxic pesticide exposure. A ban also would protect the applicators who themselves are at risk for exposure and harm. These interests are also trying to block any further expansion of the bill with a variety of tactics. The influence of the pesticide industry and their lobbyists has affected the attitudes of a long line of people - from professional organizations, to facility managers, to athletic directors, to state organizations like CCM, to municipal officials and to the applicators themselves.

Suggested Amendments:

1. It should be noted that in Section 3 (6) there needs to be an amendment. The "controlling authority" should NOT be "the executive head of the municipal department responsible for maintenance...." That is totally the WRONG person. The controlling authority should be the Director of Health in the Town or Health District or their designee.

2. There is absolutely NO reason to have this ban start in 2017. Most grounds keepers did NOTHING to transition properly to non-toxic care because they thought the ban would be reversed. When the ban came they just stopped using pesticides. The similar bill HB 5330 in Public Health Committee has an effective date of October 1, 2014. That seems like an excellent date. ONCE WE KNOW THAT THERE CAN BE POTENTIAL HARM WE MUST FOLLOW THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE AND ACT OUT A DUTY TO PREVENT HARM. THREE MORE YEARS OF EXPOSURE IS THREE YEARS TOO MANY!!!!

No toxic pesticide should be used where children play. There are gaps in testing, pesticides are not really tested for long term toxicity considering the time from exposure to diagnosis of disease can be up to 20 years. Pesticides are not tested in combination and in the formulations that they are actually used. These formulations can be more toxic than the active ingredient alone. On top of this, the testing is done by the chemical companies who manufacture the pesticides - the fox is guarding the chicken coop.

Non-toxic care of fields works well when done properly. Success is due to know how. Lots of workshops and classes have been offered, but more importantly success is an attitude to want to protect the health of the kids in the community they serve. In a town that has gone beyond the current law and has all their fields and parks under non-toxic care, the Director of Parks has said, "when I hear that another child in my town gets cancer I want to know it is not because of

something I sprayed on my fields.” If elected municipal officials really care about the health of children in their town and want playable fields, they should find someone who actually does non-toxic care successfully and not use those who complain it can't be done.

Pro-pesticide interests will complain to you about their weeds and their deteriorating turf. They talk about grass and I hear children crying. **THIS IS NOT ABOUT GRASS. IT IS ABOUT CHILDREN WITH CANCER, CHILDREN WITH LYMPHOMA, CHILDREN WITH LEUKEMIA, CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA, CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS, CHILDREN WITH CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES AND ALLERGIES. CHILDREN BORN WITH BIRTH DEFECTS. IT IS ABOUT OUR PETS DYING FROM EXPOSURE TO GRASS TREATED WITH PESTICIDES. IT IS ABOUT OUR ENVIRONMENT, THE AIR WE BREATHE, THE WATER WE DRINK, AND THE FOOD WE EAT. IT IS ABOUT ALL OF US AND OUR LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.**

Pro-pesticide interests will tell you about costs (which actually will be less once they restore the health of the soil). When they mention costs I think of the *personal costs of illness, the societal costs, the health care costs and the moral costs.* What kind of society do we live in where money for corporations that manufacture toxic chemicals is valued over the health of our children? Don't we have an obligation, a moral obligation, to our children and future generations to make sure we did all we could to ensure a toxic free legacy? Roberta Silbert

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# Childhood Cancer Awareness: Your Photos

We are not accepting submissions to the board at this time. Thank you to all who shared their stories. \*(NewsHour does not certify the fund allocations of charities included with photo submissions. Visit Charity Navigator <http://bit.ly/zKbPWY> for information on evaluating charities)

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Quinten was diagnosed with Stage IV Neuroblastoma In Dec. 2010 at 15 months old. After six rounds of high dose chemotherapy, a stem cell transplant and 12 rounds of radiation, he is in remission, Amanda Dopson writes.

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Aleksei Minarik was diagnosed with PNET Ewing's Sarcoma of the spine In Jan. 2011. He was declared cancer-free in November, his mother Ali Minarik writes. "He has been an inspiration to so many people we could not be more proud of him!"

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Teagan was diagnosed with Juvenile Myelomonocytic Leukemia (JMML) at tender age of 3.5 in Nov of '06. The only treatment resulting in a cure for JMML is a Bone Marrow Transplant, with about a 50% survival rate. She relapsed 6mo after her transplant. She passed away on September 19th, 2008. She loved anything pink, playing dress-up, books, sprinkled donuts, her blankie and stripe (her plush kitty). Forever missed, forever cherished, forever loved. [www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org)....

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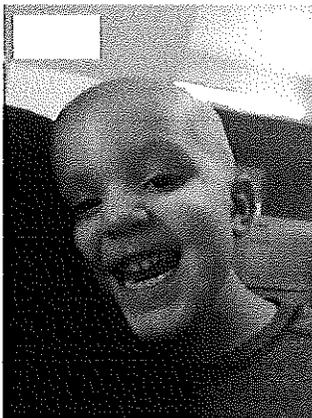


Christian on the day of his very last chemo treatment at Waller Reed Army Medical Center with his family in December 2009. Submitted by his mother Diana Fagala.

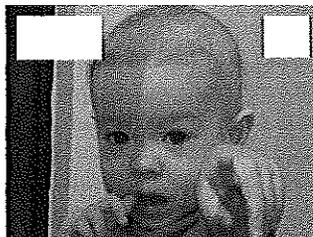
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Angela Boleyn Hey! I know that family! Much love!

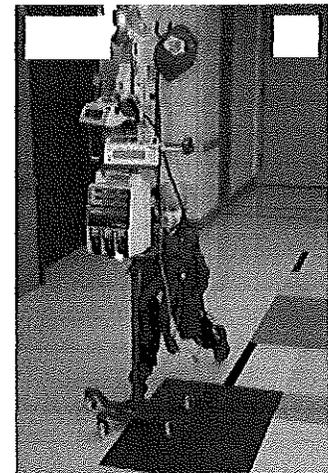


Matthew is currently in treatment for acute lymphoblastic leukemia. His mother, Wendy Burr, writes: "His treatment will last a total of 3 years and 3 months, which will be roughly



Ryan Tamayoshi at 2 1/2 years old after almost 6 months of aggressive treatment for AML. A 50/50 prognosis. He is now 13 years old.

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half of his life by the time he's done. Search

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Grace was diagnosed with brain cancer at 5. In September, she will be 5 years beyond diagnosis. She is doing well, but will have to live and struggle with side effects the rest of her life, mom Rebekah Ham writes us. Ham has documented Grace and her family's journey here: www.caringbridge....

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Sam was diagnosed with medulloblastoma, a highly malignant brain tumor, when he was 3. He is now 14 and dealing with the "gifts" of his treatment--yes, one of them being life! mom Sandy Barrow writes.

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Nicholas was diagnosed with stage 4 Neuroblastoma at 23 months on April 22, 2009. He is now 4 1/2, and kicking cancer's butt," mom Heather Noel writes.

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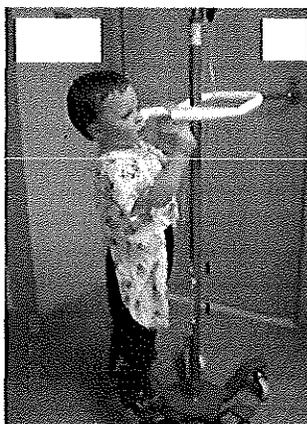
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Blake Buffa, 10, a rhabdomyosarcoma survivor. Blake was diagnosed at 8 yrs. old, the second of two cousins to be diagnosed with pediatric cancer, Randy Pickus writes.

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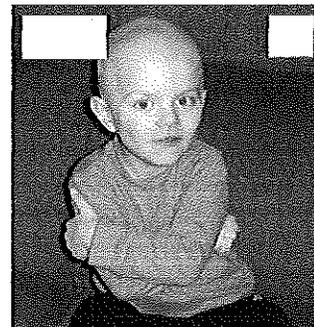
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Ethan Lent was diagnosed at 5 years old. He is seen here "riding" his IV pole in the hospital hallway. His mother Johanna Lent sent us this photo, and writes: "Ethan beat the odds, and is now a healthy 10 year old boy!"

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Makade Gaige Thom was diagnosed with Hepatoblastoma on Nov. 16, 2005 when he was 2. He is currently in remission, Michelle Knutson writes.

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Sean Hanson was diagnosed with

Emma Golden is "my hero," her mom writes us.

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Denise Bennett What a beautiful smile!!

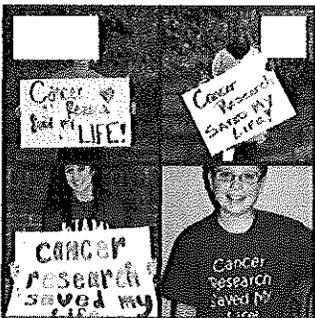


Elena, was diagnosed with ALL at age 2. She is now 4 and in Maintenance and will finish up her 2.5 years of treatment in July, mom Briana Hoffman writes. In this photo, Elena is receiving an infusion of IV chemo at Primary Children Medical Center.

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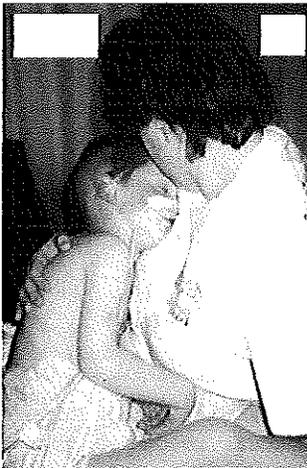
Chelsie Watson Young We love Elena!



Ellen Flannery, the founder of CancerFree KIDS Pediatric Cancer Research Alliance, submitted these photos of (top) Leah, Kamari, (bottom) Jenna and Thomas.

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Submitted by Kelly McMonagle.

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Anne Spurgeon submitted this photo of a local support network. "Local organizations like the

Samuel Cracy, 3, was diagnosed last July with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. His mother, Pauline

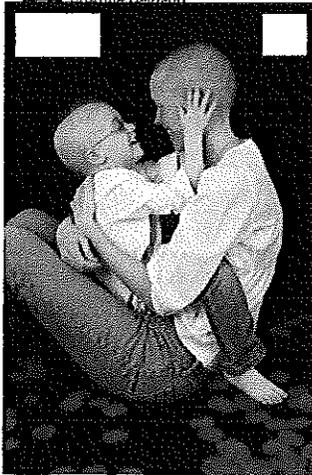
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Louise Holland  
God Bless you and the people who love you.

Melissa Shipley-Paul  
Prayers for a cure for the monster called cancer.

To Anna Delgado



Brooke Mulford was diagnosed in January 2009, when she was 4 years old, with stage IV high-risk neuroblastoma. Brooke currently shows "No Evidence of Disease" extensive therapy and treatment. Her mother, Amy Mulford, sent us this photo and writes, "there is not a day that goes by that I don't worry about relapse..."

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AldaOffNubia  
So beautiful!

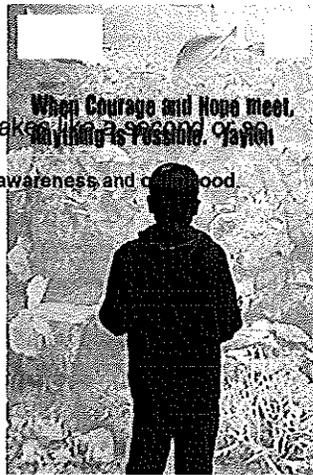
Tiffany Cox  
I would have done this for my children!



Levi, at age 5, battling high risk medulloblastoma. He is now almost 12 and battling long term effects of the treatments that saved his life, his mom writes. "He wakes up everyday with a smile on his face."

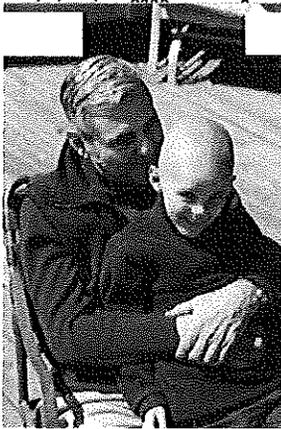
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When Courage and Hope meet, anything is possible.

Jaylon Fong, 11, is a leukemia patient at the City of Hope, a cancer center outside of Los Angeles. Francis Fong sent us this picture and tells us that he has been in



Bobby Menges was diagnosed with stage IV neuroblastoma when he was 5 years old. He is now 14 and healthy. This photo, sent by his mother, Elizabeth Menges, was taken with his late grandfather in 2004 after a stem cell transplant.

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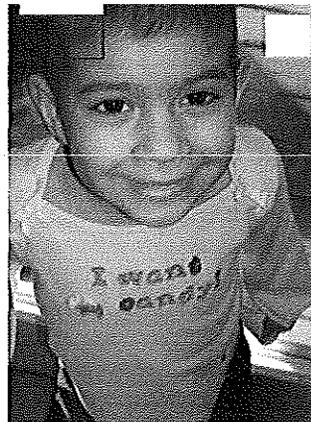
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"Sean attacks cancer like he attacks his opponents on the LAX field," mom Mary Beth Dever writes. "Sean lost his left leg to cancer but not his fight."

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Sophia Langford was 4 years old when she passed away due to anaplastic medullablastoma. Her mother, Shirley Langford, writes: "The hole in your heart never heals after losing your child and the nightmares from the fight always haunt you."

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Lauren, 14, relapsed in November, mom Cheri Chiodo writes. "my sunshine."

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Abigail was diagnosed with Retinoblastoma when she was 4 and lost her left eye due to the battle, mom Heather Adler writes. This is when she took her prosthetic out for the first time and cleaned it -

Madison, Wisconsin's 'Badger Childhood Cancer Network' support families of kids with cancer by linking them with other families to provide emotional support and emergency financial assistance.

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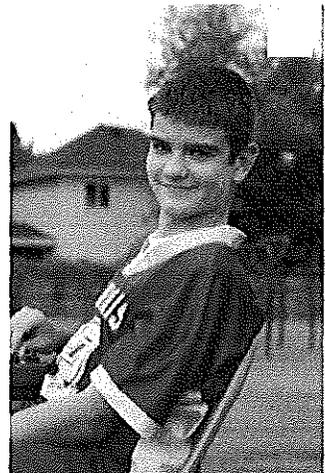


Porter Lilley, 8, was diagnosed with leukemia in October. His mother, Jen Lilley, writes: "Cancer has changed every bit of life as we know it. All he wants is to play baseball this spring..."

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Ken Thompson  
Inspiring Kid



Alex John was 14 years old, and loved life, friends, family, music, sports and animals, dad Bob Piniewski writes. He was diagnosed with cancer on Father's Day, 2007, and passed away Jan. 5, 2008.

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Sarah Neary and her sister Katie during Sarah's treatment for leukemia. Her parents Laura and Steve sent us this photo, and write: "A reminder that childhood cancer doesn't just happen to the patient—it devastates the entire family."

12 5

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Jacob was 2 years old when this photo was taken. His brain tumor had relapsed a month earlier. After aggressive treatment, including a stem cell transplant, he passed away a month later in the summer of 1999. This photo was sent to us by his father, Jeremy Shatan. He works for Hope & Heroes Children's Cancer Fund.

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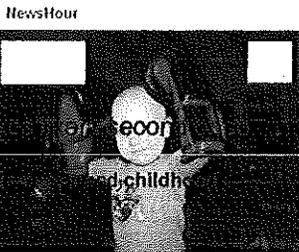
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Matthew on his Make-a-Wish trip to Pearl Harbor. Submitted by mom Tricia Litchfield.

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Kai Plunkett was diagnosed with precursor B leukemia before a week before he turned 3 years old. His mother Dawn sent us this photo, and writes: "This photo became our "logo" for the Hopes and Heroes walk we do for his clinic in the spring. Our tag line is TKO Leukemia with Kai's crew!"

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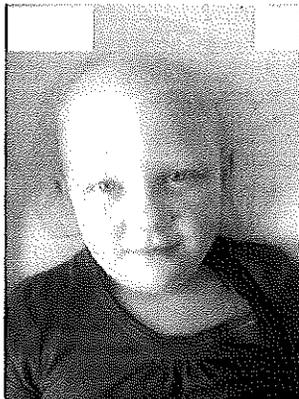
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Taylor Ann Brooks was diagnosed with desmoplastic small round cell tumor. Melissa Brooks, her mother, sent us this photo. "She should be 18 years old and a freshman in college. There were no "astonishing gains" for her," she writes. We have added a link through Taylor's photo to the Taylor Brooks Foundation.

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Pinned from taylorbrooksfoundation.org



Zoe, 6. Zoe was diagnosed with t-cell ALL on Sept. 7, 2010 when she was 5. Shared by Jen Baggett-Pramuk.

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a great accomplishment for her, Heather tells us.

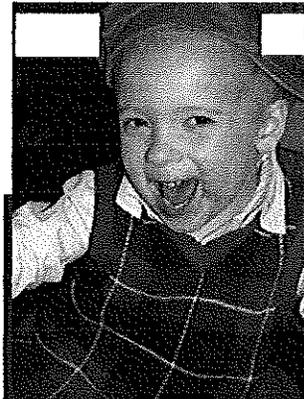
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Anna Rose Bakotic, 9, was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia last year. Her mother, who sent this photo, writes: "She is my "little survivor", as her Dad also is a Hodgkins Lymphoma Survivor."

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Graem Hobbs, 3, was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia on Christmas Eve, 2010. Candin Hobbs sent us this photo.

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Becky was diagnosed with Osteosarcoma in 2007. After four lung surgeries, five leg surgeries, six traditional chemos and five experimental trials, Becky passed away on Feb. 6, 2010. She was 10 years old. Submitted by Wendy Boucher



Chris Court was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor in January 2011. He passed away in October of last year after 10 months of treatment. His mother, Caroline Court, sent us this photo and writes: "He fought to the end and is my"



Duncan Micheltree was diagnosed with Wilim's tumor, stage III at 2 1/2 years old. His father Eric Micheltree sent us this photo. Eric writes that Duncan is now 4 1/2 years old and "doing great thanks to the doctors and COG/ CureSearch."

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Maci, 7, loves horses, the outdoors and the ballet. She was diagnosed with a brain stem glioma in Feb. 2011. "After surgery in March, she is learning how to talk, crawl, and walk all over while undergoing chemo as the tumor is growing once again," mom Shari Wnebarger writes.

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Jessica Price Love you Maci! She will be healed!