

# Daddy's Girl



## *Harley Davidson*

In September 1997 Rick Davidson and his wife became parents to their one and only child, a beautiful, little baby girl named Harley Davidson. "When my wife told me she was pregnant it came down to the fact that I could either afford a motorcycle or I could afford a child, but I couldn't have both," recalls Rick when asked about the story behind his daughter's name.

The seemingly typical proud father, Rick's pride stems from a different place than most parents. Although he's quick to point out that his daughter is an honor roll student at Windsor Park Elementary, his thoughts soon turn to the strength she has shown during the last nine months of her life.

In October of 2006 Harley was diagnosed with Aplastic Anemia. A potentially life threatening disease, Aplastic Anemia causes an individual's bone marrow to stop producing enough red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets for the body. Her parents first become alarmed after they noticed a substantial amount of bruising on their daughter's legs after a typical day of playing outdoors. However, they did not seek medical attention until a second incident occurred a few days later. At that time tests revealed that her blood cell counts were dangerously low. Her red cell count was so low that it was at the point where her heart could have stopped functioning at any moment.

Immediately following her diagnosis, Harley began receiving an intensive round of medications in the hospital. In addition to the medications, her treatment required a multitude of transfusions. She received a unit of platelets every three days for the first two weeks of her treatment; and after a month, Harley continued receiving blood products regularly with platelet transfusions on a weekly basis. It has now been six months since her last transfusion.

During her treatments, the family saw an outpouring of support from the community. "I even heard about one individual donating eight units of platelets to Harley. Not anyone we knew, just someone who had heard her story and wanted to help," said Rick.

Slowly, Harley's blood counts began to rise and she returned to school in February, where she managed to finish out the year with A-B honor roll despite missing four months of school. However, her battle is not over yet. "In a few months we will take her off of her final medication. At that time we will see if her body is able to increase or maintain her current blood count without the medication," said Rick.

Through the support of her family and friends, Harley has maintained a positive attitude through it all. "We've always tried to do what's in our child's best interest," said Rick. "It's not always easy, especially when your child tells you how much it hurts and there is nothing you can do for the pain. But my focus has always been on Harley and what's best for her."



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