



Volunteer: Sweep Team Captain

In early September of 2011, I was driving through Guilford, and all I noticed were all of the bike riders that were in my way. I was on my way to Smilow to visit my 2 1/2 year old nephew Patrick James. Just days before, Patrick had been brought to Yale-New Haven Children's ER where it was discovered he had a brain tumor. The next day, after surgery to remove 3 tumors, Patrick was diagnosed with Medulloblastoma.

What followed was fear, chemo, and tears. But something else followed that fear. Hope, support, courage, and strength. The hope and support came from the staff at Smilow. The nurses and doctors for their incredible medical care. The child life staff for their constant care to ensure Patrick stayed happy during his treatment.

The courage and strength came from Patrick himself. At age 2 1/2 Patrick knew nothing more about life than to be a happy child, and chemo was not going to stop that.

The Closer to Free Ride is an amazing event that also shows Hope, Courage, Support, and Strength. Hope for a Cure, the Courage of those who have fought cancer, Support of the Volunteers along the route, and the strength to ride just one more mile.

Those bike riders along route 77 in Guilford are no longer in my way. Today, many of them are my friends. Today we work together to ensure everyone can benefit from the research at the Yale Cancer Center, and the Compassionate Patient care at Smilow.

This year I will be supporting Smilow through a Marathon of Warmth. Along with some other crafting friends, we will be knitting and crocheting with 26.2 miles worth of yarn. The items that we knit will be donated to organizations throughout the country to spread warmth to people in need.

Each mile ridden, each mile knit, each minute volunteered will bring us closer to free!!!

