



CHEO

2011
TELETHON
June 4&5



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CHEO patient, **Joey**

Baby Joseph (Joey) Paquette was a pretty happy baby, meeting all his milestones. Then around four and a half months of age he started to get fussy, stopped eating and just wasn't himself. Mom Senna, a nurse, and dad Patrick first thought he might be teething but after a few days of this behavior, they felt something was wrong and suspected some kind of virus or stomach flu. They followed their instincts and brought baby Joey to the CHEO Emergency department.

What followed was the last thing they expected.

They arrived at 10 a.m. and by 2 p.m. after a slew of tests, they learned that their baby boy had leukemia, a cancer of the blood. Almost immediately, the CHEO docs started little Joey on chemotherapy.

Leukemia generally affects kids between the ages of two and four, so the oncology team was very surprised to see a child this young with leukemia. In this type of cancer, large numbers of abnormal

white blood cells are formed in the bone marrow (where blood is produced) and crowd the bone marrow and the bloodstream. This means that the body cannot be protected against diseases since the white blood cells are defective and cannot perform their job.

Baby Joey, who's a very sociable little guy, has been at CHEO ever since. He's adapted to life in the hospital like a real trooper. Next week, he will learn if he's in remission (no more evidence of cancer cells in his body) or if he will need a bone marrow transplant.

In the meantime, and for the next 26 weeks, he will stay with us at CHEO as he completes his treatment and the medical staff watches him closely. His parents are making the best of this unfortunate situation. They celebrated their first wedding anniversary and first Mother's Day at CHEO. Senna's mother, Erin, is staying close by to help out on a daily basis. Friends and family members come to visit and offer their support. A lovely collage of a barn and jolly farm animals decorates the wall over Joey's bed and serves as a reminder of home,

where dad is busy farming, yet still makes time to visit and to be present at each procedure. You can tell there is a lot of love in this family.

This beautiful young family probably never dreamt they'd celebrate their son's first milestones at CHEO. But perhaps Senna's aunt Wendy is providing them with a little hope; she is a former leukemia patient that was treated at CHEO 30 years ago and who is now healthy.

Senna's message to other parents is simple. "You should always go with your gut feeling and follow your instincts." She's right. Prompt medical attention and aggressive therapy are very important to ensure the best prognosis. In the meantime, and despite all that he has to go through to fight his cancer, baby Joey keeps babbling, has a big smile and is charming every single nurse on the unit.

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Kids like Joey**

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