

Shining Stars of Hope

Sonora's Journey with CBTF



While every brain tumor story and family is unique, the bonds the shared experience provides create the Children's Brain Tumor Foundation's (CBTF) vital support network. With your help, we can ensure that no family feels alone during this scary and isolating journey. Knowing you are not alone is often the key to helping families navigate life during and after a brain tumor. This was true for Sonora's family when they found CBTF.

Sonora's journey began when she was only six years old and her parents, Keyara and Rod Baker, Lieutenant Colonel Retired, noticed changes in her vision. After multiple tests, Sonora was diagnosed with a juvenile pilocytic astrocytoma brain tumor. Her parents describe the next few months as a whirlwind, feeling little control over choices or what was happening. Feelings that over 4500 families in the United States experience each year.

For 35 years, CBTF has ensured families have access to the most up-to-date and accurate research about treatment and its impacts and has dedicated millions of dollars to finding a cure for childhood brain tumors. Your support will help us find a cure and give parents hope and a sense of some control.

Sonora developed posterior fossa syndrome and could not walk, talk or hold a utensil. Despite not knowing the outcome, Keyara and Rod were convinced that, as a family, they could conquer any challenge. But the challenges brought on feelings of helplessness. Here is what Sonora's parents said about being a part of the CBTF family. "Hearing other parents acknowledge everything you're experiencing helps us feel less alone. It's amazing to see the children from the Young Survivor Group connecting with each other."

Treatment means time away from family, friends and school. Patients often miss crucial developmental and socialization lessons learned in the school setting. CBTF helps schools understand the challenges and needs of children when they reenter school and will be by their side throughout their educational accomplishments and challenges by providing individual and group support.

Finally, Sonora was able to go home and had a phenomenal recovery but coming home from the hospital is just the beginning of the journey for brain tumor families. CBTF provides support and the only national survivorship brain and spinal cord tumor programs to address survivors' and their families' lifelong educational, career and emotional needs.



Sonora's siblings', Addison and Meriel, have also felt the impact of a brain tumor diagnosis. The unknowns were especially hard for them to understand. Joining CBTF's sibling groups and meeting others with the same experiences reassured Addison and Meriel that they were not alone.

CBTF provides programs for the entire family because a brain tumor impacts the whole family forever. Just over two years ago, the Baker family learned the tumor was growing back. Sonora's parents acknowledge that despite great things today, many challenges remain. "We're still figuring out the future and know CBTF will be here for us."



Every dollar truly makes a difference. Your support will also bring us closer to a cure and eliminate the life-changing late effects of brain tumor treatment. Together, we are Stronger!

