

Kimberly Wade inspires others, carries on Jonny's dream with Kids Shouldn't Have Cancer Foundation

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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JERSEYVILLE – Kimberly Wade, the mother of **Jonny Wade**, is someone many draw inspiration from each day in her community and well beyond her region.

Kimberly and her husband, **Jon Wade**, tragically lost their son, **Jonny**, to a malignant brain tumor on Christmas Eve last year. The entire Jerseyville community rallied around the Wade family during their difficult time last year, trying to help. Jon is a hospital administrator at Jersey Community Hospital. Jonny lived for about a year with his pediatric cancer after he was diagnosed.

The Kids Shouldn't Have Cancer Foundation (KSHCF), previously known as "Project Team Jonny," was founded by Jonny and his parents and it honors his faith and strength by carrying his wish as the foundation's mission, that no other kid have cancer.

On Sept. 10 the group hosted an inaugural gala in St. Louis for KSHCF. The group publicly launched the foundation's website (www.kshcf.org) and rolled out its campaign to increase funding to pediatric cancer. Soon, Kimberly will be releasing a new book with Jonny's story, to help others encountering the same difficulties her family endured.

"I am so excited about having the event," Wade said. "I never saw myself in the pediatric cancer world or speaking on behalf of their children. But because this horrible disease thrust our family into this world it is near and dear to my heart to help all children suffering. God continues to open many doors and the gala event was another."

Kimberly Wade said her family's faith in God is what has enabled them to get through losing their son. Jonny has a twin brother, Jacky.

"I miss Jonny every day and this is the only way some good can come out of the tragedy of losing him," she said. "It makes me smile every time something is accomplished through the foundation. I know he is so proud of what he started and knows he is helping others with the foundation. That gives me the inspiration to continue to the work each day, although staying involved in this pediatric field is difficult because of what happened."

Many parents who lose their children to pediatric cancer leave it alone because they want to leave this ugly side, Kimberly Wade said. "It is extremely challenging to meet more children with pediatric cancer and go to more funerals," she said. "Jonny had eight days of symptoms of just a headache then all of sudden we found out how bad he was and the tumor was found literally overnight."

Kimberly said she feels a responsibility to speak and reach out to other parents and children to try to offer them help.

"I speak to them and tell them a little bit of what to expect and try to embrace them," she said. "I want to bring awareness to pediatric cancer but of course raise funds to give additional researchers looking for cures money they need for projects."

Kimberly said there are a handful of researchers working on promising possibilities, but there are not enough funds to get them to the trial stages.

“My main focus along with awareness and raising funds is to be there for other families and let them know what is ahead,” she said. “I also want to help them navigate through their journey.”

“I do get asked a lot to speak,” she said. “I will be working with Children’s Hospital soon to start a support group for parents who have children just diagnosed with pediatric cancer,” she said. “There are so many things they need to be told.”

The Wade family is still healing from Jonny’s death eight months ago.

“Every day is still difficult,” she said. “Working through the foundation gives me light at the end of the tunnel. I also know one day, I will see Jonny again in heaven.”