

# **“KEEP FIGHTING JONNY”: Supporters show love, offer prayer, hope for young Jerseyville boy with cancer at vigil**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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**JERSEYVILLE** - The hearts of 700 to 1,000 people from **Jerseyville and the surrounding areas** poured out prayer and emotions at a candlelight **vigil/walk for Jerseyville's Jonny Wade**, an 8-year-old hospitalized with cancer complications.

Jonny, the son of **Jon and Kim Wade**, was diagnosed with a rare brain cancer at age 7. He is a Jerseyville East Elementary second-grade student.

Jonny's only symptom before was a headache seven days prior to diagnosis. It was confirmed he had a rare brain cancer called Medulloblastoma and it spread to his spine and other areas. He has undergone several surgeries, radiation therapy and chemotherapy. Jonny is very close to his twin brother, Jacky.

Jersey Community School District Superintendent **Lori Hopkins** was extremely proud of the teachers and students in her schools and the community for participating in such strong fashion for the vigil/walk for Jonny Wade.

“Jonny is part of our student body and he is very loved as is Jacky,” Hopkins said. “From a district perspective, this is very tough on the adults and students in our buildings. The students love their little peer.”

The Wade family moved to Jerseyville two years ago when Jon became CEO of Jersey Community Hospital.

“The community has responded and gathered around the Wade family,” Hopkins said. “I say this all the time, but this is a fabulous place to go and grow. Jersey County is about family and it is a community where every person looks out for the other. That can be seen in the way people love the Wade family and support them at every turn. There are so many in the community who wish they could do more for the little one who is sick.”



Hopkins pointed out that Jonny Wade has been in the forefront of prayers for many Jersey residents.

Jonny was airlifted on Saturday, October 24th from Jerseyville to a St. Louis hospital, St. Francis/Holy Ghost eighth-grade teacher Nancy Mabery said. She helped others organize the walk/vigil. Tara Wargo and Lisa Mueller, friends of the Wade family, were at the forefront of organizing the event. St. Francis/Holy Ghost was also listed as a sponsor.

By 6:20 Wednesday night, the Jersey High School parking lot was swelling with people and it continue to grow until the vigil started. Walkers departed to the Wade home where they were greeted by Jonny Wade's grandfather. He came outside and thanked everyone for coming and said how appreciative the Wade family was for the outpouring of support.

Maggie Collins sang three beautiful songs on the Wade lawn that greatly moved those in attendance.

Maberry said the whole event was "a very spiritual experience," and "non-denominational."

"It touched me on a lot of different levels," Mabery said. "It was one of the highlights of my teaching career to share that with our students. People got up and read notes and gave messages to Jonny. It was a very positive experience."

A few who participated in the vigil were emotional and highly concerned about young Jonny.

Amber Summers said when she was 5 months pregnant some cysts were discovered in ultrasounds and she didn't know whether or not at the time her child would be facing cancer.

"Luckily it was not cancerous," she said. "I didn't have to deal with it and I was very lucky. My heart goes out to anybody in this situation because I have multiple adults in my family with cancer. It tears my heart to go through it with them. I cannot imagine going through it with a child."





Amy Hazelwood described the event “as a very touching thing.”

“The whole community has come together,” she said. “It was unbelievable. This was the first vigil I ever attended.” She said it was likely a struggle for anyone at the walk to have dry eyes.

Carmen Clark said her son recently was deployed in service, but Jonny has given her hope.

“I was reading about Jonny after my son was deployed and this has given me hope,” she said. “He is a little boy fighting for his life.”

Clark then raised her candle and said: “Here is to you Jonny.”

Donna Lott said Jonny “means the world to all of us” and he is fighting cancer like none other.

“I can’t begin to tell you how Kim and Jon could be so strong through all of this,” she said. “I don’t know if I could be as strong.”

Lott probably summed up the feelings for the 700 to 1,000 people who were in attendance with these words: “I just want Jonny to keep fighting.”

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