

Cayde
Double Lung Recipient
Cheyenne, WY

Nine-year-old Caydence, or "Cayde," is a very active little girl. She's bright and funny. And according to her grandmother Patricia, she has the attitude of a teenager and fight of a warrior.

Cayde wasn't always so energetic though. She couldn't be. Born 13 weeks early, she started life with the many struggles of a preemie, including pulmonary hypertension and pulmonary vein stenosis. The diagnosis discouraged her from running and playing too hard as she grew older. In order to thrive, little Cayde would need a double lung transplant and her donor would have to be a child.

She was added to the transplant waiting list at two years old. The final year of the family's four-year wait was spent at the Ronald McDonald House in Houston, Texas, thousands of miles from their Wyoming home because of the pediatric lung transplant program at Texas Children's Hospital.

"Your life is on hold. You live the 'no plan' plan, but explaining that to a child is difficult," said Cayde's grandmother, Patricia. "Cayde's biggest dream for her life after transplant was to run and run, and for no one to tell her no she can't."

The first call the family received about a match ended in disappointment as the lungs were deemed unsuitable just moments before Cayde was taken into the operating room. However, two months later the right match was found and Cayde received her transplant in 2013 at the age of six.

The family then learned what it meant to be on the other side of the transplant experience when Cayde's grandmother Nancy passed away and donated her corneas. Cayde reports being very proud of her "Grandma 'Ancy."

In time, Cayde's family hopes to meet her donor's family.

"They are the heroes who said yes to her and I want to let them know how truly grateful we are... what their gift of life has done for all of us," Patricia said. "But most of all to meet Cayde and know that every breath she takes is a miracle that they gave her."

Cayde and her family are now dedicated advocates for donation, participating in awareness-raising activities throughout the Western and Rocky Mountain regions.

(Pictures below)



Cayde and Jason