

Fernando

“Valley Children’s Hospital saved my son’s life!”

-Fernando Escalante-Yanez, Fernando’s Dad

In early 2016, 5-year-old Fernando was not feeling like his normal self. The usually outgoing and energetic child was suddenly always tired and suffered from body aches, pain, night sweats and insomnia. Then amid all the pain from his joints and back, he developed a fever that couldn’t be dismissed. His parents, Fernando Sr. and Angélica, knew something was very wrong.

After a first and second opinion from primary care providers, Fernando was referred to specialists at Valley Children’s Cancer and Blood Disorders Center. They found Fernando’s white blood cell count extremely high, and concluded it was pre-B-Cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL), a cancer of the white blood cells. “In that moment, I felt my heart break,” recalls Angélica.

Fernando Sr. and Angélica’s fears eased when they received hopeful news: Fernando’s diagnosis was treatable. Right after his diagnosis, Fernando had surgery to immediately place a port for his chemotherapy treatment.

For three and a half years, Fernando endured regular chemotherapy treatments. Week after week, month after month, it was not easy for young Fernando, but he persevered. Finally, in October 2019, 8-year-old Fernando got to ring the “No Mo’ Chemo” bell at Valley Children’s. This ceremony is for patients to mark the end of their

cancer treatment journey. Staff, family, friends and even Fernando’s baseball team were there to cheer him on.

Today, Fernando loves playing and watching sports. He especially loves playing baseball, his favorite sport. “He’s getting better, he’s running, he’s stronger,” says his dad. Fernando says his best memories while in treatment were meeting Las Vegas Raiders’ quarterback, Derek Carr—the first time as the Kid Captain at the Fresno State game that retired Derek’s jersey and a second time at a DC4KIDS Touchdown Challenge event.

Both his parents agree Fernando is very mature for his age. Maybe it was due to facing an incredible challenge at such a young age. They were thrilled to hear Fernando declare victory from his illness saying, “I feel so good now. I used to be so tired. Not anymore.”

Valley Children’s Cancer and Blood Disorders team helps hundreds of children like Fernando fight cancer every day. Our dedicated team of board-certified pediatric oncologists and hematologists identify and care for about 150 newly diagnosed cancer patients a year.

Angélica says, “I’m so grateful. They make you feel like you are part of the Valley Children’s family.”

Futures Worth Fighting For.

valleychildrens.org/foundation