



CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL OF RICHMOND AT **VCU**

**What I Have Learned and What I Believe
in Regards to Educational and Vocational
Needs of Survivors**

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College Essay from 2007

“My love for history was first sparked while in treatment. I check out book after book from the local library on every topic under the sun, from the Renaissance to ancient China to World War II. I can still remember sitting in bed with a stack of books next to me, completely entranced by the past. Perhaps the most surprising thing I’ve gained has been my attention to detail in both my academic life and my life in general. I can always find a way to learn...”

College Essay 2005

“Because of my young age while the chemotherapy was taking place I didn’t miss any school, despite the fact that I became a preschool dropout for the clinic visits every Monday and Wednesday. Once I started kindergarten, I only had to go every four weeks, then progressively every six weeks, so my education wasn’t tampered with too much...I remember thinking about high school and graduation in second grade and how far away it was going to be.”



College Essay 2016

“ Afraid, useless, alone, confused depressed. These are just but a few of the many emotions that individuals feel when they are confronted with a life changing event...The main idea is that no matter how dark or dire the situation might become for you, just know that you must have hope. Hope is the key to everything in life.”

College Essay 2001

Due to Wilm's tumor as a baby and having one kidney removed, this young man writes of the disappointment of not being able to play baseball, and how the chemotherapy led to a learning disability. He gives the following advice:

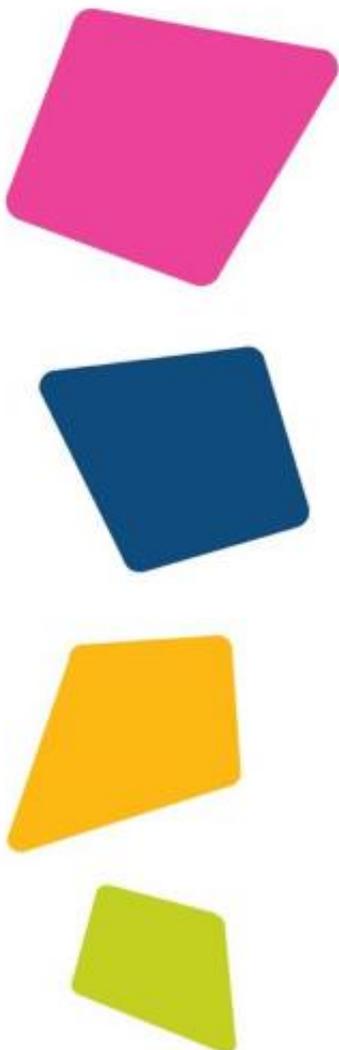
- Do rewarding things for others who are not as fortunate as you.
- Think positive about tomorrow.
- Set goals and carry them out.
- Do not worry about what you cannot do or change.

College Essay 2008

“I have always looked at myself as very unique and blessed. I think that diversity is the key..... I have had many life experiences that have clearly helped shape me into the individual that I am today. The one in particular was when I was really young I was diagnosed with leukemia. In surviving this I know I was kept here on earth for a reason. I know by furthering my education I will find this purpose...In my family we take education and knowing our futures very seriously...Advice that I would give someone that has just been diagnosed is know every life is special, that you have a future, and was put on this earth for a reason.”

College Essay 2015

“At three and a half weeks of age, I was diagnosed with Neuroblastoma. Fortunately, the surgery and chemotherapy I received were successful in eliminating the cancer; however, since then I have had seven other surgeries...These surgeries have sometimes caused me to miss school and fall behind on my work. However, this only made me work harder to get back on track to where I needed to be ...If you have it in yourself to make up your mind today and say, ‘I can do this,’ then nothing can stop you.”



What qualities do these
young people possess?

Most survivors show...

- Courage
- Strength
- Hope
- Perseverance
- Resiliency
- Determination
- Ambition
- Positive Attitude



What causes survivors to lose these positive qualities?

- Challenges
- Failure
- Loss of Focus
- Fear
- Confusion over Career Goals & Future
- Lack of Social Interactions/Friends



How can parents and health care providers keep our children, teens and YACS focused on their goals?

- Pay attention to the developmental milestones.
- Balance the extra-curricular with the academics.
- Assist with homework at a young age and continue to assist throughout middle school.
- Provide remediation and tutoring when needed. (While D's and F's are absolutely unacceptable, is a C the best that the child can do?)
- Challenge the child (No gains are made when it is too easy.)
- Communicate and discuss future goals.
- Offer encouragement, support, and resources when obstacles and challenges arise.

Pay Attention to the Developmental Milestones

- For infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, consult with your pediatrician and other health professionals regarding concerns about speech, fine motor skills, gross motor skills, etc.
- Contact the Office of Early Childhood and Intervention for the county in which you live. Ask for an evaluation to see if the child qualifies for services.
- At home, provide educational toys and resources that stimulate learning and play
- Explore the preschool programs that meet the child's physical and developmental needs

Balance the Extra-Curriculars with the Academics

- Play teaches children how to interact with peers and adults
- Play enables children to play team games and compete
- Play teaches children how to be creative
- Play teaches how to adapt and learn new skills
- Academics instill the desire to learn
- Academics teach new skills using different modalities
- Academics provide the opportunity to meet new challenges
- Academics provide building blocks that lead to future success and career preparation

Why Homework is Important?

- Helps the child develop strong study skills at a young age
- Enables the child to review skills taught earlier in the day
- Allows for time to explore subjects more fully in order to foster understanding
- Integrates learning by applying new and different skills
- Provides structure for completing assignments and preparing for the next day, and even for the years to follow
- Enables the child to develop self discipline and independent work habits

Provide Remediation and Intervention

- If the child is doing poorly in a subject area, request a teacher conference and consult with the teacher in regards to the nature of the problem.
- Ask for teacher assistance or tutoring, before school, after school or during planning period
- If the child continues to do poorly, then request a Child Study Team meeting to discuss if an educational plan is warranted.
- Talk with the medical team to see if neuro-psych testing is needed to identify strengths, weaknesses, and accommodations that may be needed in the educational setting.



Challenge the Child/Teen

- Grade level is not a glass ceiling
- If your child is making A's and B's with minimal effort, explore a gifted/accelerated program
- Colleges value students who challenged themselves at an Advanced Placement (AP)/Honors level (Even if they make a "B")
- Be the advocate for your child's gifts

Communicate and Discuss Future Goals

- Ask lots of questions
 - What do you want to be when you grow up?
 - What do you think you are good at?
 - What are your interests inside and outside the classroom?
 - If you had the “perfect” job what would it look like?
- Enroll your child in activities of interest
 - Summer camps
 - Art/music/theatre classes
 - Sports
- Consider a career assessment for high school students
- Talk to your children about your future goals, let them learn from you



Offer Encouragement, Support, and Resources

- Praise your child for accomplishments
 - It takes 7 positives to negate 1 negative
- Make a “Positive Sandwich”
- Seek assistance and support from your Comprehensive Medical Team
- **Do you know your resources?**

Resources

- ASK Childhood Cancer Foundation
- Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS)
- Special Love
- The PAVE Program
- Office of Students with Disabilities (Colleges/Universities)
- Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services