

My United Way Story- By Jill McPhee, Biology Department

United Way giving was always one of those activities I participated in, but usually with the mind-set that I wanted to help others. I hadn't had any reason to directly benefit from services involving them or their associated agencies.

This all changed for me and the rest of my family in November 1999. I was 9 months pregnant, with my now 8 year old daughter, Shannon. We were on top of the world and excited for a new baby to arrive. That's when the hammer fell. Our son, Ryan, then 4 years old, was diagnosed with leukemia- that same week our daughter was born. What an emotional week- an understatement for sure.

As my newly born daughter and I were at one hospital, my husband and son were at another. Once the four of us rejoined, one United Way local associated agency – CURE Childhood Cancer Association- came to our rescue and helped us in so many ways. They provided us with information about the disease, educational support, names of the doctors/oncology staff, parking validations, or even just a chance to have a cup of coffee and talk to someone who's been there too. Their care and emotional support was and still is immeasurable. Their motto is "because kids can't fight cancer alone". Neither can the families who are fighting along with their child. With CURE, we are always among friends- all in this group together that we never wanted, or imagined, being in.

Our association with CURE continues to this day, even in light of the fact that our wonderful son died in June 2006. They provide monthly bereavement groups for us parents, and an annual remembrance service for all the children who have passed on. I find comfort in the remembering and CURE is always there when I need them.