

[Local Spotlight]

Hope Happens at Riley: Lucy Beyers' Story

by Melissa Glidden

Residents of Hamilton County may have already caught a glimpse of 4-year-old Lucy Beyers' bright smile on one of several billboards in the area. The billboards are part of the Riley Children's Foundation's specialty license plate campaign—a campaign that has raised more than \$400,000 to date with the help of people like Lucy and her family.

Lucy was born with a condition called heterotaxy syndrome. The condition caused her heart and intestines to form incorrectly, resulting in three major surgeries by the time she was just 12 weeks old, including open heart surgery. Her mother Courtney Beyers describes how Lucy and her family spent the first six months of the little girl's life at Riley Hospital receiving extraordinary care. "Riley has been absolutely amazing," says Beyers. "I can confidently say Lucy wouldn't be here today without the support of each and every doctor and nurse at Riley Hospital."

Beyers recalls several moments during Lucy's stay at Riley where the staff's encouragement and support stands out to her. In addition to expressing gratitude toward Lucy's cardiologist Dr. Mark Turrentine for his caring attention before, during, and after Lucy's heart surgery, she's also grateful for her pediatrician, Dr. Anne Farrell. "The hardest day of my life was carrying my baby girl down to the operating room, and praying she would come back the same Lucy," says Beyers. "Later that day, Dr. Farrell came out of the elevator with a huge smile on her face and said, 'She did amazingly.'"

Dr. Farrell, Associate Professor of Pediatrics in the Pediatric Cardiology Division at the Indiana University School of Medicine, has been Lucy's doctor since the little girl's birth. She describes how the Beyers have given back to the community in light of Lucy's medical journey by providing meals at the Ronald McDonald House, fundraising, serving on the parent committee for the redesign of Riley Hospital's new cardiac heart center, and more. "It is really inspiring to see families go through their own personal struggles and difficulties with a child's illness, yet find the strength after that to be able to give back and help others," says Farrell.

Beyers says that Lucy and her family openly share their story knowing that it inspires others, and helps garner support for Riley Hospital. She says the most memorable part of her family's journey so far has been when a party thrown in Lucy's honor resulted in a very special donation to the hospital.

"When Lucy was in the hospital, there wasn't a time where she was without a bow or headband in her hair," says Beyers. "We threw a 'Thank You for Praying for Lucy' party, and asked each guest to bring a bow or headband. We ended up donating over 500 bows and headbands to Riley Hospital!"

Beyers adds, "Seeing Lucy grow into a healthy 4-year-old is a miracle, and we want people to know that hope really does happen at Riley."

Today, Lucy is described by both her mother and Dr. Farrell as a typical little girl: happy and full of energy. According to Beyers, "Lucy is all girl! She loves to twirl in her dresses, wear big bows, and play with her dolls." She adds that Lucy loves dressing up as Queen Elsa from the movie Frozen, and belting out the film's hit song, "Let it Go."

Dr. Farrell agrees with Lucy's mother, saying, "Lucy has a smile that lights up the room, a hug that melts my heart, and has lived her life active and happy as if nothing had ever happened to her."

Find out more about donating to Riley Children's Foundation by visiting www.rileykids.org.