

Community Joins to Create Gravestone After Brain Cancer Takes Child

As the Johnson family of Menominee mourned the death of their 22-month-old son Abram, they worked to save the money needed to create a very special gravestone. This month, with the help of Menominee Granite Co., and Upper Peninsula Lions Clubs, they purchased a beautiful grave marker that will be engraved with the following poem written by Abram's mother, Heidi:

We thought we would watch over you.
There is now no need.
We thought we would make a straight arrow of you.
You fly true without us.
We thought to teach you all we knew.
You know more now than we ever dreamed.
We thought we would bring you to meet the Lord.
You see His very face.
We thought we would love you forever and ever.
That we will.
We will.

Abram was diagnosed with a choriocarcinoma brain tumor shortly after his first birthday. Despite about nine months of excellent treatment and care, he died peacefully on July 2, 2019.

Menominee Granite Co. owner Todd Schloegel stepped up to provide and engrave the marker at a discounted cost. Schloegel said, "We wanted to continue our stewardship of helping in our community. We want to do what we can when we can." Funds to purchase the gravestone were provided by the Upper Peninsula Lions Childhood Cancer Program, the Delta Menominee "Heart of the North" Lions Club, and the Vulvan-Norway-Loretto Lions. "The Lions' Club of Michigan has blessed us by donating toward a beautiful gravestone," said Johnson.

This continues the support that the Johnsons received during Abram's illness. Johnson said that the whole time Abram was sick, his 12 siblings pitched in and loved him all the more. "Our whole community prayed and supported us through the entire ordeal. Our family earnestly hopes that this gravestone will be a comfort to everyone who loved our little boy, and an encouragement that God loves us, even when things go differently than we had hoped."

Lions' clubs in many communities throughout the Upper Peninsula—and around the world-- engage in a variety of service projects. Upper Peninsula clubs can be located at the District 10 website, district10lions.org. Families with a child who is battling cancer or has had cancer in the past are encouraged to contact the Upper Peninsula Lions Childhood Cancer Chairman, Christine Smith, at lionchris906pcc@outlook.com, or 313-682-8900. Smith says that the Childhood Cancer Program offers financial help and opportunities for free wigs, face-to-face and virtual camps and martial arts training designed for specifically for kids with cancer.

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