

The Alex Smith Family

On January 6, 2017, Alex visited her pediatrician's office because her joints ached, her lymph nodes were swollen and she had a low-grade fever. She returned home and collapsed from a fever spike. A blood test at a local community hospital led to a transfer to Penn State Children's Hospital – something was seriously wrong.

Her mother Laura said, "They took her in, they did the bone marrow and within minutes the doctor was there. He pulled up a chair, sat next to her and took her hand and said, 'you have leukemia.'" Her preliminary diagnosis was Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia.

When they first got the news, neither Laura nor her husband realized the substantial strides that have been made in treating childhood cancers in the years since they themselves were children.

They now understand it's through organizations like Four Diamonds and its dedication to research that helped make an 80 percent survival rate possible.



"The thing about Four Diamonds that makes it so unique and so special is the fact that they have services available for the entire family," Laura said. "They didn't just give us a diagnosis on that Friday night, they actually gave us hope."