

I NEVER SIGNED UP FOR THIS!

*“It is not possible for civilization to flow backwards
while there is youth in the world.”*
– Helen Keller

When Katie Strumpf was diagnosed with leukemia, there were no online resources or publications to offer guidance to a ten-year-old kid dealing with cancer. While still going through treatments, Katie told her mom that someday she would write a book for children with cancer.

Katie wanted this book to be full of practical advice from someone who’s been there – someone who’s put up with doctors and medications and hair loss. But mostly she wanted her book to inspire hope.

Katie’s parents knew their determined daughter could do it. “I’m very headstrong,” says Katie. “When I make up my mind about something, you have to get out of my way.”

Doctor’s worst nightmare

Ten-year-old Katie had been listless and pale with frequent nose bleeds and bruising for about a month. Her parents took her to the doctor to rule out anemia. The blood tests came back with a totally unexpected result – acute lymphatic leukemia (ALL).

Katie’s parents immersed themselves forwards and backwards to learn all they could about ALL. “They became the doctor’s worst nightmare!” says Katie.

At the time, Katie was part of a clinical trial where the medical professionals were trying to determine the best treatment for two different age groups – ages 10 and under vs. 11 and older. One group was given chemotherapy and radiation; the other was treated with chemo only.

The Strumpfs read that children who receive radiation can lose some of their fine motor skills and have challenges with reading, so Katie’s mom insisted that Katie be placed in the “chemo only” study group. They also wanted her treated as an eleven year old ...