



Dear Friends of Domus Pacis,

In March 2017, my son Eli was an active and lively almost two-year-old when we noticed he was having difficulty moving his left arm. After several doctor visits, an MRI confirmed Eli had a large brain tumor.

Following an 11-hour surgery, Eli couldn't lift his head or move the left side of his body. It was almost a week before he was able to walk again.

Overall, Eli's outlook was positive as pathology reports indicated that there was a ninety percent chance the tumor would not come back. However, within two months our relief turned to heartbreak when a follow-up MRI showed Eli's tumor had regrown and was more aggressive than before.

Even though there were no known treatment options, for the next six weeks, Eli underwent 28 radiation treatments to buy us some time to figure out what we could do. This led to hydrocephalus which would require another brain surgery. Eli then started a newly developed oral chemotherapy that was successful at controlling the growth of his tumor.

Over the next five years, Eli would take almost 2,000 doses of oral chemotherapy, have 34 radiation treatments, 54 MRI scans, 218 therapy appointments, and 130 oncology appointments.

We first heard about Domus Pacis at Children's Hospital Colorado. While our family was dedicated to living every moment of whatever time Eli had it was extremely difficult to balance medical appointments, work obligations, school, and caring for the needs of all three of our children. After hearing our story Domus Pacis was able to arrange a week-long respite in a condo right next to the Breckenridge Resort.

While Eli had physical challenges, he worked hard and had become quite a good skier. During his respite Eli was determined to ski each day and even began inviting his teachers and therapists to come join him on the slopes. By the end of the week, he had spent time with everyone important in his life. As a family, we continue to look back on that as a fun, joyful and epic trip.

Unfortunately, not all stories end happily, and on October 14, 2022, Eli passed.

Eli lived more in his seven and a half years than many people do in a lifetime. He knew his time was limited and that realization caused him to find joy in every day and live with purpose.

After Eli's passing Domus Pacis was there once again to support our family and provided us with a *Grief Respite* - a space for healing and making new memories as a family in a time when we were broken and in a dark uncertain place.

My words will never be able to express my gratitude for the gift Domus Pacis has given my family, -- the gift of time and memories together. Please consider giving to this impactful organization.

With gratitude,

David Mahrker