

## ANTON'S STORY

Today Anton is an energetic seven year old with an amazing zest for life and a heart of gold. At birth, Anton was a healthy in all respects, though a few strange pimples marred his forehead. Within weeks he began to develop a severe rash on his abdomen and scalp. Despite many trips to the pediatrician, the rashes grew worse.

At four months we finally met with a pediatric dermatologist. Unknown to us, he had seen these symptoms twenty years earlier as an intern and knew exactly what tests to run. He was somber when he explained to Colleen that the rashes were an indication of a rare and potentially fatal disease known as Langerhans cell histiocytosis (LCH). We were distraught when we heard the news, afraid of what this meant for Anton and for our family. Anton's doctor referred us to Stanford's Pediatric Oncology & Hematology unit, and we began treatment with steroids and chemotherapy almost immediately.

The treatment was very difficult on our tiny son, and he cried many hours day and night. The strain took its toll on both parents, and on Anton's older brother and sister. The support we received from family and friends was amazing. Our faith helped us through the endless days and nights, and helped us cope with the difficult questions we faced. Finally, after about four months of chemotherapy, the rashes began to recede and Anton was able to stop the treatments.

Anton has been in remission since that time. We still see the occasional rash on the skin that reminds us the disease could return someday. Anton's physical and cognitive development has been impacted by the disease and treatment, perhaps permanently. Yet Anton has been blessed with an amazing spirit that adds so much joy to the world.

We are grateful for the research that had been done on this disease at the time of Anton's diagnosis, and the fact that it had been effectively communicated to the medical community. Through this hike we hope to advance that work and help other infants, adolescence and adults who are affected by this disease.

## ABOUT HISTIOCYTOSIS

Histiocytosis is a rare blood disease that is caused by an excess of white blood cells called histiocytes. The histiocytes cluster together and can attack the skin, bones, and organs. The disease can range from limited involvement that spontaneously regresses to progressive multi-organ involvement that can be chronic, debilitating and life threatening.

The majority of histiocytosis cases occur in children under ten. The disease affects roughly 1 in 200,000 children born each year in the United States. It can also occur in adolescents and adults of all ages. Histiocytosis is so rare that there is little research into its cause and treatment and is often referred to as an "orphan disease", meaning it strikes too few people to generate government supported research.



**The Histiocytosis Association of America (HAA)** is an international partnership of parents, patients, physicians and friends bound together by their mutual interest in histiocytic disorders. In an effort to compensate for the limited information on the disorders and the small number of individuals and families dealing with them the Association provides a variety of educational and emotional support programs to its members, as well as other interested parties. In addition, the Association promotes scientific and medical investigation into histiocytic disorders through its research program with the aim of establishing better treatments, a cure, and prevention of the diseases.

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2005



Once again, it's time to  
dust off those boots,  
stretch out those muscles  
and start training  
for the climb to  
the top of Half Dome!

HIKE REGISTRATION FORM



