

NCCS Walk Raises Funds, Awareness

The National Children's Cancer Society National Walk Honoree

When Brian Ott was only three years old he was diagnosed with a brain stem tumor that extended down his spine. From that moment on, the lives of his family members would never be the same.

In the early stages, Brian's disease caused several life threatening conditions, but he remained positive and happy despite all the difficulties he faced. Brian's Mom, Erin, said "as long as he could play with a ball he didn't care where he was!" His first round of chemotherapy consisted of weekly trips to the hospital for 18 months. During that difficult time, the N. C. C. S. provided the family with financial assistance for gas and meals, and offered emotional support.

Brian's cancer became stable, despite the odds, and the family attended the first N. C. C. S. walk that year. Brian's mom said, "We were so impressed, we have walked every year since, it's amazing to see all the survivors and their families together – all with the same goal, to help spread the word about childhood cancer and to celebrate these brave, amazing kids!"

In the fall of 2004, Brian's cancer relapsed. He had 48 radiation treatments and endured months of physical and occupational therapy. When Brian was well enough to return to school, the N. C. C. S. provided his classmates with a coloring book called *Sammie's New Mask*. This invaluable tool helped educate his classmates about cancer in a way first graders could understand.

Today, Brian is seven years old and is fun loving and full of energy. He enjoys swimming and playing baseball, hockey and football. Brian is also a member of the Boy Scouts. When Brian was asked to be the national honoree for this year's walk in September his response was a priceless smile and a big high five. Brian is looking forward to this year's event and declares, "No one is pushing me in a wheelchair; this year I'm walking!"