

Prayers from

**Maria**



Children's Glioma Cancer Foundation

Prayers From Maria Foundation  
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www.PrayersFromMaria.org

## About Us

On April 1, 2006 life ceased to exist the way my family knew it. My oldest child and only daughter, Maria, was diagnosed with a *diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma* (DIPG). DIPG is an inoperable incurable brain tumor that strikes children usually between the ages of 5 and 11. A child with this diagnosis is given a 10 to 12 month life expectancy.

With the devastating diagnosis of our Maria came a great deal of sorrow and pain as well as desperation. My husband, Ed, and I frantically searched medical journals, books, articles and the Internet for anything—any sign of hope that we could cling to that might possibly save our daughter's life. Instead, we were surprised to find very little research and few experimental trials. That which we did find was difficult to decipher from a layman's perspective and, of course, each case study ended in the death of a child.

What we uncovered was that childhood glioma (brain tumor) research was grossly underfunded, and there was no organization acting as a clearinghouse or translator of the state of research for newly diagnosed families. There is simply not enough being done to find a cure and the public remains unaware of the magnitude of this disease. The cure rate for most brain tumors is significantly lower than that for many other types of cancer. **The Glioma family of tumors account for almost 45% of all tumors. They are the second highest cause of cancer deaths among young people. 85-95% of children who are diagnosed with gliomas die within five years.** This is unacceptable.

As a result, we have started the *Prayers from Maria Foundation* that is charged with funding research into a cure for childhood gliomas, and to advocate for families with such conditions. Initially, it is our goal to gather enough funding to provide grants to research institutions that can demonstrate how they plan to best use the money to find a cure for this child-killing disease. Eight of the very best doctors and biomedical researchers in this area have agreed to be on the foundation's advisory board. Based on their knowledge and the research that the foundation will fund, we plan to create a destination for newly diagnosed parents to access the most up-to-date information regarding glioma research and options for treatment. Eventually, it is our goal to offer financial assistance to parents without the means to get the best treatment available for their child.

From all that I have seen since our daughter's diagnosis, I know we can make a difference. Together we can help find a cure and give hope to afflicted families.

If you are interested in volunteering, making a donation or finding out more please contact us. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Sincerely,

Megan McNamara  
President, Prayers from Maria Foundation

*Helping Families, Finding Cures*



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