

Hello, my name is Ryan Menter and I am a sophomore at Noble High School. I live in Lebanon, Maine and am totally blind. At 20 months, I was diagnosed with a pediatric brain tumor and began 15 months of chemo. Just 2 months after the diagnosis, I became totally blind as the tumor crushed my optic nerves. I was in remission for a few years until a huge tumor was found in my left temporal lobe on June 28, 2012. I did 18 more months of chemo and have thankfully been in remission since December 3, 2013.

As such a young person, all of this was quite hard to digest. So many questions came to my mind: Why has this happened? What does this mean? and Where do I go from here? I thought all I could do is keep going. I need to keep my head down, work on school, keep strong and fight this with all I can. I continued going to school and people always asked why. Most thought I would just stay home and rest, keep out of the public and wait until I was healthy. The only problem was ... I didn't want to. I knew I had such potential, I was in excel classes, I was on the Student Council and most importantly, I was happiest in the learning environment. By no means did I feel well, I was tired and nauseous regularly because of the chemo medication but I knew laying around at home would not help me heal. So I would get up, and say "let's go" as I went to school. Defying the odds, I went most days and worked on what I could sometimes the whole day and sometimes half a day. Still, I was happy to learn as I have always enjoyed school and I began feeling stronger. Each day I felt slightly better and worked a bit harder and just kept saying, "let's go."

Each Tuesday I would go have my treatment but it would never dampen my happiness. I kept my strong faith, kept a wide smile on my face and plugged along. Eventually, the final MRI scan in late 2013 told us I was clear of the second brain tumor. To most, such a long time in treatment would set them back but for me, it pushed me forward. I gained a new level of resiliency, and appreciation. This was just a part of my journey and yes, it was hard but a lot of things in life are and a challenge can strengthen more than it weakens. I knew throughout all of this I couldn't give up, I was a bright, inquisitive little man and my potential was great. All I could do is keep my faith and tell myself I can do this, "let's go." The sky is the limit and no matter how hard it seems, how easy it sounds to just not try, everyone has to keep going so their abilities are highlighted. The world will stay a better place if everybody just puts their worries aside and keeps going regardless of any other factors.