Anna Van Giesen
Fort Worth, Texas

In 1989, Anna Van Giesen, a charming, active 3 year old began to limp. She was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, an aggressive cancer had spread throughout Anna's body with in month. Even if treated aggressively, the family was told at the time that the survival rate was usually less than two years. However the chances for survival improved with a then, new advance form of treatment, an autologous bone marrow transplant.

Anna was actively in treatment from September 1989 until May 1990. This included toxic doses of chemotherapy to reduce the size of the tumor, surgery to remove the tumor, radiation and an autologous bone marrow transplant.

She had a sudden bleed out that was nearly fatal while she was in the bone marrow transplant unit. During the bleed out, the medical staff was able to sustain her life by continual infusions of blood platelets provided by friends as well as unknown donors.

She also had periods of complete fatigue. When Anna's energy was totally depleted, she and her mom would spend five hours having a blood transfusion which gave her the fuel to continue to fight her disease and to enjoy being a little girl.

Today she remains cancer free and at 22 is about to graduate from college.

Anna would not have survived the treatment without the blood and/or platelet transfusions.

Anna's pictures
Top: At time of diagnosis
Middle: Ready for first dance class after chemotherapy (note "line" under right arm
Bottom: Graduation picture