

Hannah McNutt Memorial – 4/7/12 – Written and Read by Mark Lo, MD

My name is Mark and I am a fellow in pediatric emergency medicine at Seattle Children's Hospital. What this means is that we saw Hannah often during her battle with seizures, as the emergency department is usually the front door to admission to the hospital. Starting with the Airlifts from Bainbridge and then the Medic One transports from Seattle, we had the privilege of getting to know Hannah and her family fairly well. Her seizures were really hard to control – I admit I felt powerless at times since our usual anti-seizure medicines didn't seem to work on Hannah. But the memories about Hannah that stay with me the most are the ones of her parents Allyson and Greg and seeing how they coped with Hannah's disease.

Seizures can look really scary – and the treatment in the emergency department can be scary as well, with iv pokes and side effects of medicines, and the general intensity of the moment. Greg and Allyson absorbed all of that, and still were able to function with grace and with resolve. They were always whispering in Hannah's ear, stroking her hair, letting her know that they were right next to her. Even in brief emergency department interactions, I could tell that Hannah was loved deeply and unreservedly, and every day of her life I am sure that she always knew that she was loved.

I have a daughter one month younger than Hannah, so when I saw Hannah and her parents in the ED, it made a particular impression on me. As parents, we all want to be strong for our children, we want the best for our children, we would go to the ends of the earth or cut off a limb if it meant that we could help our children. When I think about Allyson and Greg, I think about how they modeled for me their deep love for Hannah and Wes. Their sacrifice, their courage, their resolve, and their love are inspiring to me. Thank you, Allyson and Greg, for showing me what parenting looks like, at its most profound and significant level. I know that Hannah is enveloped in your love, even as she is now in a place where she is seizing no more.