



## Humans of New York

May 5 at 11:02am · 🌐

Over the next couple of weeks, I'll be posting stories gathered from the Pediatrics Department of [Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center](#). Obviously these are not going to be easy stories to read. These are war stories. The treatment of cancer can be nearly as violent as the condition itself, and even the doctors will frame their efforts in terms of warfare. But the fight against pediatric cancer is uniquely tragic because the battlefield is the body of a child. So these are definitely war stories. But as with every war, there are heroes. You'll meet the amazing doctors, nurses, and researchers who have committed their lives to this fight. You'll meet the moms and dads who refuse to crumble while living out their greatest fear. And most importantly, you'll meet the reason that everyone is fighting, and the greatest warriors of all—the kids. So yes, these are war stories. But this is also the story of humanity's bold response to the greatest injustice of nature. And as we learn these stories, we'll be raising money to play our own small part in the war.



Over the past two weeks, 90,000 of you donated nearly \$3.4 million to help fight pediatric cancer. That is a staggering amount of money. Thank you. For those of you who might not have been in a place to contribute financially, thank you so much for engaging with this difficult material. The support and solidarity you showed these families was just as valuable as the money itself. You are the most caring community of people on the Internet. That's no exaggeration. It's proven by the tone of every comment section. And it's proven by the \$8.5 million you've given to charity in the past 1.5 years. You are such a compassionate collection of people, and I can't thank you enough for all that you've contributed to HONY. Lastly, thank you so much to Dr. O'Reilly and the Department of Pediatrics at Memorial Sloan Kettering for making this series possible. Special thanks to Nina Pickett and Rachel Corke, who paved every stone on my path.

I've got one last story to leave you with. Last night you raised over \$1 million in honor of Max to research and cure DIPG—the brain tumor that killed him. Dr. Souweidane tells me that this money represents the “single greatest leap forward” in his personal crusade against DIPG. When I interviewed Julie a few days ago, we were sitting on a bench in Madison Square Park that had been dedicated to Max. The plaque listed all the things that Max loved, and one of those things was ‘millions.’ I asked Julie what that meant. ‘Max’s uncle Charley gave him one hundred dollars,’ she told me. ‘And Max kept saying that one day he’d have a million.’ So thank you, everyone, for giving Max his million.

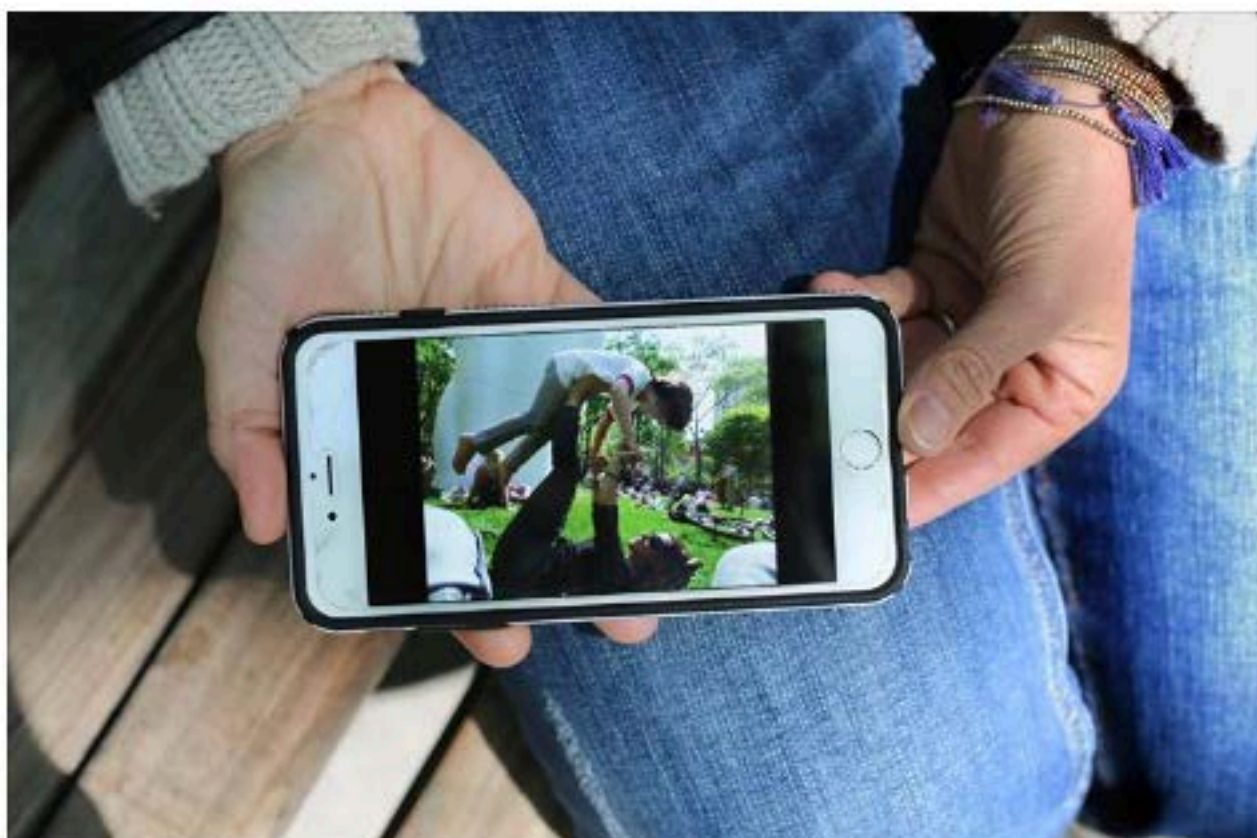
I'll be leaving the fundraiser up all day, for anyone who would still like to donate: <http://bit.ly/1TpFcdy>



(5/5) "I used to be a really happy person. I really was. I was the person who would walk outside and say: 'Isn't everything beautiful? Isn't life wonderful? Aren't we so lucky?' I don't have that sense of joy anymore. I remember the Mother's Day before Max was diagnosed. It was four years ago. We were in this same park. On the lawn over there. It was beautiful. All three of us were there. Irene and I were in love. And Max was lying on my feet and pretending to fly in the air. And he was laughing so hard and I remember feeling so happy and full of life. It was the last moment that I truly felt joy."

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Today is the last day of our fundraiser to aid **Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center** in their fight against pediatric cancer. Over 70,000 people have donated and with over \$2.6 million has been raised so far. Max's tumor is the same tumor that Dr. Souweidane is working on curing. (See previous story). In fact, Max was supposed to be part of Dr. Souweidane's first clinical trial but he passed away too soon. I promised Julie that all money raised during the telling of Max's story would be given to Dr. Souweidane and his colleagues to aid in their DIPG research. The gift will be given in Max's honor. Even if it's a small amount, please consider donating: <http://bit.ly/1TpFcdy>



(4/5) "I think I have post traumatic stress. I have so many horrible flashbacks. Two weeks after Max was diagnosed, he asked me if I'd be his Mommy forever. I said, 'Of course I will.' And he asked: 'Even when I'm ninety?' And I told him 'yes.' What was I supposed to say? And there were all the times he talked to me about the future. We'd talk about college. I just couldn't tell him. God I was such a coward. I should have told him. I just couldn't do it. Even toward the end. The day before he lost consciousness, I read his favorite book to him. It's called Runaway Bunny. And the little bunny keeps threatening to run away. And the Mama bunny keeps saying: 'Wherever you go, I will find you.' Oh God, it was such a horrible way to die. He couldn't speak or move or swallow or see. He basically starved to death. And the whole last week I'm whispering in his ear: 'Let go, let go. Please Max, let go.' My seven-year-old son. I'm telling him to let go. I mean, fuck. That's not supposed to happen! And the whole time I never told him he was dying. I was such a coward. But he knew. He knew without me telling him. Because a couple weeks before he lost his speech, he asked me: 'Mommy, do they speak English where I'm going?'"

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Today is the last day of our fundraiser to aid [Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center](#) in their fight against pediatric cancer. Over 65,000 people have donated and we've raised over \$2.3 million so far. Max's tumor is the same tumor that Dr. Souweidane is working on curing. (See previous story). In fact, Max was supposed to be part of Dr. Souweidane's first clinical trial but he passed away too soon. I promised Julie that all money raised during the telling of Max's story would be given to Dr. Souweidane and his colleagues to aid in their DIPG research. The gift will be given in Max's honor. Even if it's a small amount, please consider donating:  
<http://bit.ly/1TpFcdy>





## Humans of New York

May 19 at 4:05pm · 🌐

(3/5) "There was a tumor in his brain. The doctor told us that he knew what it was. He said it was called DIPG and that he hadn't found anything that worked. He said it would eventually kill him. And I started screaming. And I asked how long. And he told us a year. He told us that 'doing nothing' was an acceptable choice. And he said, 'This will be harder on you than it is on Max.' And I remember looking at Max. And he was so beautiful. All he had was that crossed eye. Our life had been beautiful and now everything sucked. I didn't know what to do. So we went to the Lego store. He was obsessed with Legos. That night he got so many Legos."

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Today is the last day of our fundraiser to aid [Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center](#) in their fight against pediatric cancer. Nearly 60,000 people have donated and we've raised over \$2.2 million so far. Max's tumor is the same tumor that Dr. Souweidane is working on curing. (See previous story). I promised Julie that all money raised during the telling of her story would be given to Dr. Souweidane and his colleagues to aid in the fight against DIPG. The gift will be given in Max's honor. Even if it's a small amount, please consider donating: <http://bit.ly/1TpFcdy>



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## Humans of New York

May 18 at 8:13pm · 🌐

(4/4) "My childhood was building things: model rockets, model cars, train sets, airplanes. And I didn't just build them. I focused on every detail. I hand painted every letter on the train. I sanded the wooden ribs of the airplane until everything was so precise and fit. And it felt so good when that work was finished and appreciated. It was the same drive that brought me into neurosurgery. I loved fixing things. And I had always been successful. To get to be a neurosurgeon, I had to succeed on so many levels. I'd become accustomed to success. But I finally found something I couldn't fix. All my DIPG patients were dying. It was failure beyond failure. Kids were dying because I'm not good enough at this. And they don't deserve it. And neither do the parents. It's so hard to face these parents. They've envisioned everything that's going to happen to their child from the day they were born: the first girlfriend, the first job, the first homerun, the first time tasting meatballs, it's infinite. And they come into my office and, 'Kaboom.' All of it disappears. It's horrible. Seeing their faces. It's beyond abominable. I just can't take it. I've got to stop these kids from dying."

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Help us fund Dr. Souwedaine's work. There are less than two days left in our fundraiser to help fight pediatric cancer at [Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center](#). Your donations will fund the science that saves the lives of children. This includes the research of Dr. Souwedaine. Over 50,000 people have donated and we've raised \$1.9 million so so far. It would be amazing if we could reach \$2,000,000 by the end of the series. Even if it's a small amount, please consider donating: <http://bit.ly/1TpFcdy>

