The Wagon Project: Family Hits the Road to Support Pediatric Cancer Patients

The Hoovers know what it's like to watch a child battle a serious pediatric cancer.

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On August 1, the Hoover family of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, set out in their blue RV to bring some cheer to kids with cancer. For the next several months, they'll be making a pit stop in every state to "hopefully give some hope to people," Kevin Hoover told the NBC-affiliated local TV news station WBTW.

Kevin and Suzanne Hoover's 6-year-old son, Baxley, is a survivor of Stage IV rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare type of cancer that affects skeletal muscle tissue, according to the American Cancer Society. While people of any age can develop rhabdomyosarcoma, the disease often affects children and teenagers.

Baxley, who was diagnosed two years ago, is now cancer-free, but the experience of weathering a life-threatening health crisis left a lasting impression on him and his parents. While brainstorming ways they could support other kids with cancer on the one-year anniversary of Baxley's final round of chemotherapy, they hit upon the idea of delivering wagons to at least one child in every state.

"As we started talking to other parents, they were commenting on how wonderful that is, and it is just a little beach wagon that is common on the market. We found a different use for it," Kevin Hoover told WBTW.

The wagons have an emotional significance. During treatment, Baxley chose to be carted around the hospital in a wagon rather than a wheelchair. "It was a safe space for him," Suzanne Hoover told WBTW. "He stayed in it for all of his chemo infusions, so we are hoping to give some safe space for other kids too."

The Hoovers will drive to all 48 continental states and fly to Alaska and Hawaii. Their first stop is Jordan Lake, North Carolina, and they'll be making several stops in Virginia.

"We meet parents all the time, and they're where we were two years ago, and we know what that's like, so we really just want to say, 'Hey, it's going to be OK—we're here for you' and give them a little hope as we travel,'" Kevin Hoover told WBTW.

To read about another initiative that supports kids with cancer, see "Alabama Teenager Shaves His Head, Raises Nearly $50,000 for Children With Cancer." For a collection of articles about childhood cancer, click here.

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