

# INSPIRATION

in(t)-spe-'rā-shen *n* 1. a divine or supernatural influence 2. to be an animating, enlivening, or exalting influence on another; to spur one to act 3. to draw forth or bring out

*"Journaling everything during Garver's treatment gave me a focus and solace. The journal became my talisman."*

**Lily Akers-Reaman**

## FROM PAPER TOWEL TO FULL RECOVERY

LILY AKERS-REAMAN, PRESIDENT, JOURNAL SPECIALTIES, INC.

**SYMPTOMS:** When Lily Akers-Reaman's son Garver was just two-years-old he would frequently and unexplainably just drop to the ground, seemingly over-exhausted from simply playing with the other children. Over the next few years Garver would exhibit other symptoms such as the occasional swelling of his ankles and face and he continued to oftentimes feel overly fatigued.

As quickly as Garver's symptoms would appear, they would disappear leaving Garver's prognosis a mystery to his pediatricians. It was not until Garver entered into his early teens that he began to show stroke-like symptoms. He was immediately admitted to Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital at University Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio.

**DIAGNOSIS:** When Lily met with doctors the diagnosis was heart-wrenching. She was told by the Chief of Pediatric Hematology and Oncology that Garver had Lymphoma in the Central Nervous System (CNS) caused by an undetected tumor.

"When I received Garver's prognosis, I felt so angry. I went down to my car, locked the door, held on to the steering wheel and just screamed," said Lily.

For Lily, it was devastating to hear the news that her son had cancer. The fact that she was only handed a paper towel to write on exacerbated Lily's grief further. "I couldn't believe the hospital didn't have anything other than a paper towel to write on. It was even a challenge finding a pen," Lily recalls.

**TREATMENT & RECOVERY:** Once Lily had filled up the paper towel with Garver's treatment regimen, she moved on to a small notebook where she wrote down everything from the caregivers' names to her emotions. According to

Lily, "Journaling everything during Garver's treatment gave me a focus and solace. The journal became my talisman."

Garver was in the hospital for a total of 500 days and throughout his treatment process met many new friends that helped him cope with his illness. One such friend was Howard Hall, PhD, PsyD, Assistant Professor of Psychology and Pediatrics at Case

Western Reserve University, whose powerful pain management techniques were instrumental in Garver's recovery. Howard now works closely with Bernie Siegel who is world-renowned for patient empowerment.

Throughout Garver's treatment and recovery, Lily continued journaling and found it not only emotionally comforting, but helpful in finding the right treatment regimen. Careful detailing of what treatments had and had not worked for Garver led to his recovery.

Garver is the first person to recover from an undiscovered tumor causing lymphoma in the CNS, and is one of the "Glaxo-First Fifty" patients in the world treated with Oral Zofran. Garver was 18 years old when he reached a full recovery. He is now 29 years old and is considering starting his own business in Cleveland.

**MY RECOVERY RECORD™ IS BORN:** Once Garver had reached a full recovery, Lily decided that she wanted to share the comfort she had gained from journaling with others dealing with a loved one with a long-term illness. She founded **Journal Specialties, Inc.** in 2002 and introduced the first product in the market, **My Recovery Record™** (MRR), whereby patients and family members can responsibly track their complete recovery.

My Recovery Record™ is a 176-page resource and journal for patients, family members and advocates who are undergoing long-term treatment for serious conditions such as cancer. **The Treatment Tracker**, an undated 52-week journal, makes up the heart of MRR, as it allows the user to mark down appointments and treatments as well as capture feelings and thoughts throughout the recovery process. The journal has areas for patients to track their medical history, contact information of all recovery team members and hospital services and the "Recovery Reference," which explains who's who in the recovery process.

For more information or to order My Recovery Record™, visit [www.myrecoveryrecord.com](http://www.myrecoveryrecord.com) or call 440-543-0425. A portion of proceeds from MRR will be donated to various medical support and research charities including, The Joey Reddig Trust, a fund that helps families deal with the cost of treatments.



[myrecoveryrecord.com](http://myrecoveryrecord.com)

Please send your stories to OA so that others who read them can be filled with hope and inspiration to press on against cancer. Send your stories to [kdesatnik@rcmed.com](mailto:kdesatnik@rcmed.com) or fax to 440.942.7970 marked *Attention Asst. Editor*.