

February 3, 2014

D'mani Felix is a seven year-old pediatric oncology patient at Chris Evert Children's Hospital at Broward Health. He is diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL) a. D'mani, his mother, and his two siblings moved to South Florida from the U.S. Virgin Islands in August 2013. D'mani's family moved to Florida seeking new opportunities, after his parents were laid off from successful careers due to company closure. One week after arriving, D'mani's mother was making arrangements for him to enter school by getting his school physical. At that time, he was recommended to be further evaluated for symptoms that ultimately were diagnosed as cancer.

D'mani is undergoing a course of treatment that includes chemotherapy on a weekly basis at this time. His outpatient treatment is expected to last three years, and he is hospitalized as needed. D'mani was recently hospitalized for several weeks due to infections that could have been life-threatening, as he is immune compromised. During the several months that D'mani has been a patient at Chris Evert Children's Hospital, his mother has consistently brought him for treatment. She always has a positive outlook and puts on a happy face, although she is struggling internally with the way her son's cancer has changed her life.

Once the family moved to South Florida, they began residing in one room in the home of D'mani's aunt which was meant to be a temporary arrangement. D'mani's mother has been unable to seek employment since her son's diagnosis, as she needs to be available for his many appointments and hospitalizations. At this time, D'mani is not able to enter public school due to the risk of infection, and participates in the hospital homebound program. D'mani's family wants to be able to live in their own home and not rely on family members, but this has been a challenge due to the lack of income. D'mani's mother pays a small amount of rent to her sister, which has made it difficult to save to rent their own apartment or home. The children's father has remained residing in the U.S. Virgin Islands, but is unable to join his family until they have their own place of residence. This family needs support to make a life for themselves under these new circumstances.

Sincerely,



Melissa Stachowiak, LCSW

Social Worker