



family
spotlight

By Alison Bogle and Photos by
Chad W Adams Photography

Meet the
Gerault
FAMILY



The story of the Gerault family – Donnie and Brooke Gerault and their three sons Anderson (9), Parker (8) and Conley (4) – could easily be all about Parker and his battle with a brainstem ganglioglioma, an incredibly rare and deadly brain cancer. Instead, my conversation with Brooke was equally about the deep appreciation their experience with cancer has given them for their faith, friends, family and the power that community has to truly change lives and to lift up its members during times of trial and hardship. They have been stunned by the outpouring of love, support and generosity that Lost Creek has shown them, and they hope that by sharing their story, Lost Creekers can understand how truly special our neighborhood and community is.

Anderson and Parker have always been exceptionally close. Just 16 months apart, the brothers shared toys, friends, hobbies and a bedroom. The boys would talk late into the evening, laughing and sharing secrets. It was this closeness that helped the Geraults realize that something wasn't quite right with Parker. Anderson starting complaining that Parker was making strange noises. Brooke and Donnie stayed up one night to hear for themselves what was going on. They were concerned when they heard then 6-year-old Parker gasping for breath, as he stopped breathing several times while they were listening. Suspecting sleep apnea, the couple pushed for a sleep study.

The ENT evaluating the study expressed concern that something wasn't right and consulted with experts at Johns Hopkins about the test results. Based on that review, as well as on an additional review from a local pulmonologist and pediatric sleep specialist at Dell Children's, it was recommended that the Geraults get Parker in for an MRI right away. Something was clearly awry with his central nervous system. On December 26, 2017, Donnie took Parker for his MRI while Brooke stayed home with Anderson and Conley. The family had plans to meet up at Lupe Tortilla, Parker's favorite restaurant, for dinner once he made it through the MRI. They never made it to dinner.

Parker went into emergency surgery right away. The family was told that he would likely suffer some paralysis and that he would need a tracheotomy and a feeding tube. They were also told they would never hear their son's voice again. As if that weren't enough, there would be no way to predict whether or not Parker would suffer brain damage as a result of surgery. Parker's heart stopped twice during the operation. When he came out of surgery, he was paralyzed on half of his body and spent 28 days in the pediatric

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