



Letter from Malky's Doctor

It is with an exceptionally heavy heart that I am sharing the news that Malka Hirth died this morning. It's hard to know what to say about Malka. I've known her essentially her entire life. She spent the past 6 years bravely fighting AML. She and her family, together, endured chemotherapy, 2 transplants, DLI, and countless procedures. Malka was an extraordinary young woman. I know we often say about our patients that they are "wise beyond their years," but Malka was truly an "old soul." She and her parents touched everyone they met in ways that are hard to imagine, considering how young she was. Her parents are remarkable people as well. They are kind, loving, intelligent, wise, and held together a huge family with warmth and love that is all too rare these days. It has been an honor to take care of this family.

Malka's last days truly capture who she was. Over the past couple of months, she painted pictures for each of the special caregivers she has grown so close to, so that each of us would have a piece of her artwork to remember her by. Then, in December, lying in bed with her mother, she picked up her mother's iPhone and spontaneously composed/sang a song of thanks to G-d for the life she was given. Mary Jo's friends at Peabody set it to music, and I have attached it for those who want to hear it. The lyrics are pasted below. They are incredibly moving, and it's all that much more remarkable that they came spontaneously from the heart of a 7 year old girl who knew she was dying.

Malka celebrated her last Shabbos with her family this past weekend, and individually said goodbye to each of her 9 siblings, and then instructed that no one was to cry. She died peacefully this morning in her mother's arms. She will be buried tomorrow on the Mount of Olives, in Jerusalem, overlooking the Old City and the Temple Mount. This was her request. She asked her father to bury her someplace special, and when he asked her where would be special, she said, "Eretz Yisrael" (Israel).

Malka and her family loved the team at Hopkins who provided such exceptional care to her. As her attending for all of these years, I, too, am grateful to all of you for all that you did for Malka. I will miss her and her family terribly, but I am a better person for having known her and for having worked with them.

David Loeb