

70%

of the patients that visit the Red Cross Children's Hospital oncology ward are younger than six years old and come from impoverished communities where there is little to no household income.

ONCOLOGY WARD UPGRADE PROJECT

The Oncology-Haematology ward at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital is a place that holds stories of courage, stories of survival, stories of loss and stories of unexpected triumph over this disease. The 21-bed ward is home to doctors, nurses and specialists who have dedicated their lives to helping their young patients fight cancer. But most importantly, it's home to the most remarkable children you will ever meet, children who fearlessly fight a battle most adults could not. Children that need your help.

It started slowly.

First he complained about pain in his legs. Then he started crying himself to sleep.

After visiting many doctors, Duvan's mother, Nadia (a naval officer from Cradock) was told that her child was suffering from growing pains. Nadia knew that there was something desperately wrong with her little boy and with each incorrect diagnosis, her desperation grew. Watching her son go through such incredible pain with no end in sight was heart-breaking.

Nadia decided to listen to her instincts and she took Duvan to the military hospital on the naval base she was stationed at. The doctors at the military hospital immediately referred Duvan to the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. When Nadia and one-year-old Duvan arrived at Red Cross, the doctors did just one test, a bone marrow test and was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia.

"It only registered after two weeks of being at the Hospital... My son had cancer."

Duvan's struggle with cancer was a difficult journey over three years. Soon after his first round of chemotherapy, Nadia realised that Duvan was allergic to the treatment and battled infection, fevers and low blood counts for three long years. It would have been easy for Nadia to let her heartache consume her, but her son's strength and resolve pulled her out of her sadness.

"He is my fighter. He is so strong. Then he was sick and so tough. He never complains. "



On Red Cross, Nadia said: "The G1 Oncology Ward is amazing. There is no better place to be if your child has cancer. They wanted to send me to another hospital and I said no, that would be like sending me away from my home. We've lost kids in this ward. Us moms, when one child dies, it's like my child has died. These are all my children. I feel like God made these doctors and nurses just so that they could work in this ward."

Duvan is now five years old and in September 2016 he completed his final treatment and is in remission. Duvan has gone back to being a carefree child and is running and playing again. Duvan still comes in for check-ups every three months.

Nadia is just so thankful that this part of their lives has come to an end and that they can focus on the future. **"Never ever in my life would I have thought that I would be sitting with a child that has cancer but God pulled us through."**

HOW YOUR DONATION WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO CHILDREN LIKE DUVAN:

- INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ISOLATION ROOMS FOR TRANSPLANT PATIENTS WHO HAVE SEVERELY DIMINISHED IMMUNE SYSTEMS
- GIVE PARENTS AND PATIENTS BETTER ACCESS TO MORE BATHROOMS
- INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CONSULTING ROOMS FOR DOCTORS
- CREATE CRITICALLY IMPORTANT SPACE FOR FAMILY COUNSELLING
- CREATE A NEW SPACE FOR CLINICAL RESEARCH

We need your help to raise the R13.6 million by October 2018 to ensure that these young patients', their parents' and hospital staff's experience in the ward is as comfortable as possible. Your support means that patients will continue to receive the best care possible.

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