



Blood Bank of Alaska
Helping Alaska patients in need



Find Your Reason to Donate Today **Recipient Stories: Jacob and Nina**

At two years old most children are keeping their parents busy. During this age most children learn to talk fluently, begin the transition into preschool and are on the go. Jacob was no different. The youngest of Nina Caterinichio two sons he was an active toddler always running and playing until one day she noticed a change. Nina, "Jacob was turning two years old, it was two weeks before his second birthday. We noticed Jacob's energy levels went down – he would run and play and get really tired and want to lay his head on your shoulder and just fall asleep." She knew this was not normal behavior for her son and over the course of three weeks it became progressively worse.

Nina decided to take Jacob in to the doctor after her sister noticed a discoloration in his lips, they seemed to have a blue tint to them. The doctor ordered a series of laboratory test for Jacob to determine what was causing his decreased energy levels. They determined that Jacob was losing blood count and was diagnosed with Transient Erythroblastopenia. This condition causes the bone marrow to shut down and to stop replacing the needed red blood cells. Nina, "When you hear something on the phone that your child is sick – it is like an immediate – I don't know your heart sinks." Jacob would need a blood transfusion to try and correct the condition.

Nina immediately took Jacob to the child cancer wing at Providence Alaska Medical Center, where the blood transfusions were administered to jump start Jacob's bone marrow production. After two blood transfusions Jacob's body began to respond.

Jacob is now a healthy, happy, energetic four year old boy because of the generosity of those who donated blood in his time of need. Today Nina makes it a point to share her story with others and to advocate the need for blood donation. Nina, "Donating blood is never in the front of your mind. You don't often think about how many people need blood, but the need is constant." Nina and her family are forever grateful to those who donated blood and realize that without their loyal dedication to community her son might not be here with them today.

Call 222-5630 to schedule your appointment today.