BLEEDING DISORDERS FOUNDATION
OF NORTH CAROLINA

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Dear Friends,

I am often asked why the **Bleeding Disorders Foundation of North Carolina (BDFNC)** is such a special organization to my family and why they should support the **Family Festival & Walk** fundraiser. I wouldn't be where I am today without the support and resources that BDFNC has provided us over the past 13 years.

The start of our story isn't all that different than many parents in this community. After the birth of my second son, Noah, my family's life changed drastically. While we already had a healthy two-year-old at the time, we could not have anticipated what was to come. While Noah's birth went as planned, when he wasn't brought back to us quickly after his circumcision, we knew that something was wrong. The doctors started asking if there was a history of bleeding disorders in our families because they couldn't get the bleeding to stop. It took hours of constant pressure, along with stitches and cauterization for the bleeding to finally slow. The next morning, we received the diagnosis that we were entirely unprepared for – **hemophilia A.** Noah spent a few days in the NICU, where he received his first factor infusion and then we took him home.

My husband I knew we needed community support and quickly found Hemophilia of North Carolina, now called the **Bleeding Disorders Foundation of North Carolina,** that provided support for people impacted by bleeding disorders. We quickly started attending as many events as we could to learn about hemophilia. We met other families who have children with bleeding disorders. I learned from the men with bleeding disorders – Blood Brothers – about what it's like to grow up with hemophilia. The people who we have met and connected with over the years have become like a second family. We support each other through our ups and downs, and never have to feel isolated or alone because we always have someone to reach out to.

Thirteen years later and Noah is a typical kid! He plays soccer, rides his bike, hangs out with his friends, and spends entirely too much time playing video games and watching YouTube! And while he sometimes complains about having hemophilia, he hasn't let it stop him. Noah learned how to self-infuse his medicine when he was 8 years old because he saw another kid self-infuse. He looks forward to BDFNC events, where he can meet up with his friends with a bleeding disorder like him.

My family knew we needed to give back to the organization that helped us so much, so we started participating in the walks in 2012. Fundraising has provided us a great opportunity to share and educate those around us about hemophilia and bleeding disorders. Friends and family have always been so willing to support us. Noah and his brother have also started fundraising for our team with their friends.

The Bleeding Disorders Foundation of North Carolina is an amazing organization and community! They provided my family *hope* and continue to provide services to individuals and families across North Carolina. Please support the **2024 Family Festivals & Walks** so that others can benefit from the same services that helped my family.

Thank you,
Gillian B Schultz
Gillian Schultz
Director of Programs