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Race for Hope Continues

Friends, family of Krista Thompson bring hope to those with cancer and take steps towards finding a cure.

By **Kelsey Inscoc**
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In 2004, Krista Thompson was diagnosed with a brain tumor. After surgery, radiation and chemotherapy, everyone was hopeful that she had beaten the tumor. Unfortunately, it returned as a glioblastoma, a type of brain cancer. She died in 2008 at age 17. Glioblastoma is an aggressive type of cancerous tumor. It can progress despite any treatment that exists. Krista's struggles inspired those around her to do anything they could to help others with brain cancer. "Tumors hit people of all ages," said Kathie Thompson, Krista's mother. "We want to help other families so that they do not have to go through this,"

Krista's friends and family teamed up to raise money in her honor to help find a cure for brain cancer. Each year, they participate in the Race for Hope in Washington, D.C. This year's event was on Sunday, May 3. More than 250 member of Team Krista participated in the race. They raised more than \$28,000, almost three times their original goal. "Team Krista was the second largest team to participate," said Christine Palma, a family friend. "Reigning American Idol champion David Cook's team was first."

KRISTA WAS able to resume usual teenage activities once she began a cancer treatment called Avastin. "A lot of people didn't even know that she was sick," said Kim Giammaria, a family friend and Team Krista member. A member of the orchestra at South County Secondary School, Krista lettered in swimming, played field hockey and tennis. She even had a part-time job as a lifeguard while continuing to attend school and spend time with friends. Krista's father Steve Thompson is an advocate for the drug that helped Krista's life return as close to "normal" as possible.

Steve Thompson was asked by BethAnn Telford, a brain tumor survivor and Race for Hope supporter, to speak before an FDA advisory panel where he and others advocated for the approval of Avastin. He shared Krista's experience in his presentation, and the committee unanimously voted in favor of approval of Avastin. The advisory panel gave its recommendations to the FDA and it was approved May 5. Avastin is now available to others with Glioblastoma.

Steve Thompson credited Krista's doctors at Johns Hopkins and the Bio Tech company Genentech who developed the drug. "Avastin is not really a chemotherapy in its conventional form, but rather it targets a specific gene and chokes off tumor blood supply in an effort to halt growth and shrink tumors" he said. Krista was given less than two months to live, began taking Avastin and lived the better part of a year.

Steve and Kathie Thompson recently attended a conference in Miami where he shared additional information on how well Krista functioned on Avastin and got the chance to meet some of the people who work for Genentech. "It was great," Steve Thompson. "We had the opportunity to thank them publicly for what they did for Krista and others with brain cancer. They are also a really nice group of people. This is a giant step forward for brain cancer patients and one more step towards a cure."

"Everyone who gave to Team Krista and all of the other Race for Hope Teams can be so happy that their money goes into research to find new drugs like Avastin," said Kathie Thompson.

Krista, her family and friends have given new hope to those suffering from brain cancer and cancer in general. They have proved that anyone, even the most ordinary person, can do something to take part in the race for a cure.

"Although Krista is gone, her struggle and others made it possible to bring a new treatment forward," said Steve Thompson. "Brain cancer can be the worst of all cancers striking anyone, but now there is something new for patients that can help, and real hope on the horizon that this can be cured if we never give up."



Contributed by the Thompson family
Krista Thompson

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