

After unsuccessful treatment, St. Joseph parents seek alternative therapy for daughter



By Brock Weir

Reading reports on how the community came together to honour his seven year old daughter last month warmed the heart of Janusz Nowosad.

The Nowosads continue their stay with Laura as the St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School student continues her experimental cancer therapy in Houston, TX.

Earlier this year, parents, students and friends in the St. Joseph community came together for a benefit concert, raising thousands to support the family as they continue their difficult journey.

Sadly, however, her treatment has not been as successful as they had hoped ? but they are not giving up that hope.

The northern Oak Ridges family has put their faith in antineoplaston, a new treatment currently under review by the American Food and Drug Administration (FDA). With approval still pending, the only way they can use this treatment in Canada is with permission from Health Canada to find a local practitioner through their Special Access programs.

Their requests to the ministry, however, have also been unsuccessful and the family ? along with supporters who made the Saving Laura benefit a reality ? are seeking public support to change the minds of policy-makers through an online petition to Minister Rona Ambrose.

?We started targeted gene treatment in November, but we have found out it is not so good in Laura's situation,? Mr. Nowosad tells The Auroran. ?We simply thought she needed more time to take the pills and the medications. So far, we have a stable situation, but it is still very dangerous because the tumour still grows. If it grows more in this location she will die from lack of oxygen.?

The family heard about this new treatment at their clinic in Houston. It is something, he said, found to be particularly beneficial in children, but after a trial was concluded, results are now under review by the FDA.

?It looks like the FDA needs more time to review this information, but we don't have that time,? he said. ?Laura's tumour is simply in a very bad position and she can die very soon. We were told we could export the therapy to Canada as long as we had doctors in our location and approval from the Federal government.?

So far, the only doctor they have found willing to help their situation is in Toronto, but with that secured, permission is still outstanding from the Feds and continual appeals have been denied.

?I have nothing to lose in this case,? he said of their efforts. ?My daughter is surviving somehow but we know this gene therapy is not going how we expected. We want to come back to our home. Laura wants to come back to her friends, if she is not able to come back to school yet and, of course, we're tired of living in charity in Houston. We're trying to help our daughter with the best medication we have with this deadly disease. Good or bad, we want to come back to our home because that is what everybody wants to do.

?This is like torture for us because we know there is something available. We want to try it, but we can't do it. The only hope for us is to fly to Australia, do it there, but why do we need to go far away and explain to a different government why our government is not helping us. We hope somebody there will open their eyes and see our situation.?

For more on the petition, visit savinglaura.com.