



THE POWER OF HOPE

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Joe Depa: Melissa, our beautiful daughter, she loved to dance and sing and play just like any other 3-year-old. At one of her annual checkups the doctor noticed that her platelets were low, we went to get some further testing done and realized that she had acute myeloid leukemia, which is a rare form of childhood cancer.

When we got the diagnosis, we were shocked. I really struggled with the idea that I couldn't help her, and so I was reliant on doctors and the best doctors in the world to try to help my child but after that there was not much else I could do besides try to be there for her. Melissa didn't make it - she passed away from leukemia and one of the things that I promised her was that I would never stop fighting for her, and all the other children that would be diagnosed with any types of cancers.

When I found out Melissa was diagnosed my wife and I, the number one priority was making sure we were with her, because she was going to be in the hospital for about 3 months of intensive chemotherapy. So I went to my boss at the time Casey Roos, and I said I need to take a leave of absence - and Casey said, "no you don't we've got you covered, we have an hours that help program at Accenture."

My 1st reaction was I can't possibly accept that all of these employees' hard earned vacation hours, how can I possibly accept that and Casey said something to me that stuck with me to this day he said, "wouldn't you do the same for me? Wouldn't you do the same for me?" and I still remember that conversation because of course I would, there's no other answer.

Some of the treatments that Melissa had to endure were very, very intense- even if the treatment a successful there was actually various side effects that could happen. There was sort of a one size fits all approach to the treatment - what I was trying to figure out was why there wasn't a more precise way to treat Melissa's type of cancer that was different than another child's type of cancer. And so one of the things that I've been trying to help with is actually helping these hospitals use their data more effectively.

In my work I do this for clients. I help take data and analytics in and provide insights back to our clients. What I was working on was something called Target Pediatric AML- we were working with several different hospitals to help look at how we get all of their data in a format and in terms of there's different types of treatment options available for those patients.



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Some of my colleagues found out about it, and said hey we want to help you too - and so we had some colleagues that started to help putting together some data harmonization around these different hospitals and looking at ways that the treatments were different based on the patients.

And all of a sudden there was more and more help that started to come. We were able to actually take a team of data scientists use actual data from Fred Hutch Children's Hospital, and create what we called Data Ingestion Pipelines so now there's about 2,000 patients that their genes have been mapped. And while it's not a cure, it's certainly one step closer to understanding how to treat cancer more effectively in the pediatric cancer population.

I'm incredibly grateful for the ability to help others, the ability to hopefully use my understanding of data and AI and analytics. When I told Melissa that I would keep fighting for her I meant it and so I think about Melissa every single day. I'm a fundamentally different person as a father as a friend- most people are going through something and you look for ways to help that person.

Having gone through this experience has really helped me be a more compassionate leader. That promise I made to my daughter to make sure that I would never stop fighting for her, it actually helps me feel better. others.

People often say giving back is sort of a Band-Aid for the soul and so my wife and I about \$700,000.00 we've raised for childhood cancer research- every year on Melissa's birthday, we deliver about a 1000 toys to the Children's Hospital here in Atlanta. The best way to sort of cope with the child loss for us as individuals and as and as a couple and as a family is to give back to others.

We hope as parents that Melissa's life continues to live on in us - through her journey she will never be forgotten. We can help others so that her life continues to shine on until we hopefully see her again one day.

That hole in our heart it will never go away and we think about Melissa every single day. We are always going to have that scar and there's days that I just don't even know that I want to get through- but the more that I've been able to help others, and give back, and the more my wife has been able to help others and give back, the better that we feel about Melissa's life, the better we feel about our lives and our journey.

And we hope that by talking about it by talking about it now we're able to give others hope too and I hope that everybody finds hope and in this message as well.