

My Life With Conner

By Rodey Watkins

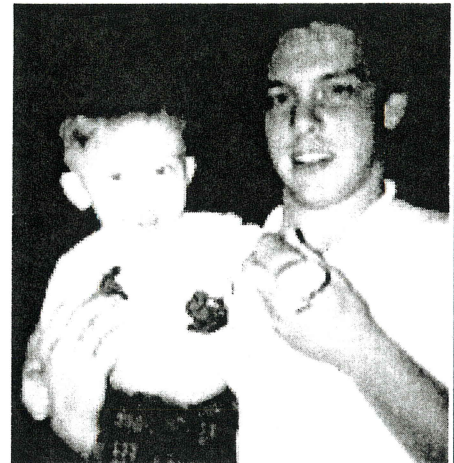
I had a perfect son, I was a happy father and as proud as any man could be. A year and a half later came the news— Sandhoff disease, my son is dying. I thought, “Well, of course we can beat this, all we have to do is stop the storage.” I didn’t want to hear the bad stories, or the information about what the disease was doing to my son. Yes, I was in denial. Slowly I understood it may be bigger than I thought. I was watching my son’s life slip away from inside him... I felt like I was kicked every time I looked down at him and tried to get some kind of response from him.

Still I tried to go on. Everyone told me I must keep going, so I tried still to be professional in work. I honestly thought I was I had been doing good— but inside, I knew better. I cancelled appointments, often finding myself sitting behind my desk doing nothing but slipping farther in farther into depression. Everyone around me knew it except myself. I just couldn’t see it. I thought I was still playing the roles I needed to, and taking care of what I needed to, but it all wasn’t that easy. I was trying to work when I just couldn’t focus.

It was not long till I decided to sell my 80-hour a week business to my partners and move the family to Florida. Yes it sounded better, since it seemed like everything around me was crashing down. It seemed like my family didn’t want to be around the situation, I felt so alone.

Even friends and neighbors didn’t want to be around our sick child.

Florida was wonderful for the first month, but two weeks into the next month, Conner died. I lost my only son. Still, I find it weighing so heavy in my heart to this day, and I often find myself asking him for help and strength to keep going. If



there is one thing I have learned from all of this, it is to live happily and put our petty differences aside. Life is too short, and anything can happen at any time. I would also like to give special thanks to my wife for being so strong and giving me strength to get through this. I couldn’t have done it without her.