

Culture

CANCER UPDATES, RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Jasmine Brenneman is some kind of special sister. Featured in the Fall 2006 issue, Brenneman spent most of her senior year in turmoil after her younger brother, Josh, now 7, was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma. She was thrust into mini-mom mode, caring for her younger sisters (today, Joy is 18, Jubilee is 15, and Jordan is 13). Regular teenage life seemed to be permanently on hold.

Now, three years since Josh's diagnosis and treatment, she's starting to feel like things have settled into a routine. Brenneman, 20, is a junior at Simpson University and Josh is full of energy and spunk, despite a tracheotomy, continued complications with his esophagus, and being fed through a tube. "It was devastating to see what happened to Josh," she recalls. "People have said, 'Isn't it time for you to move on from this?'

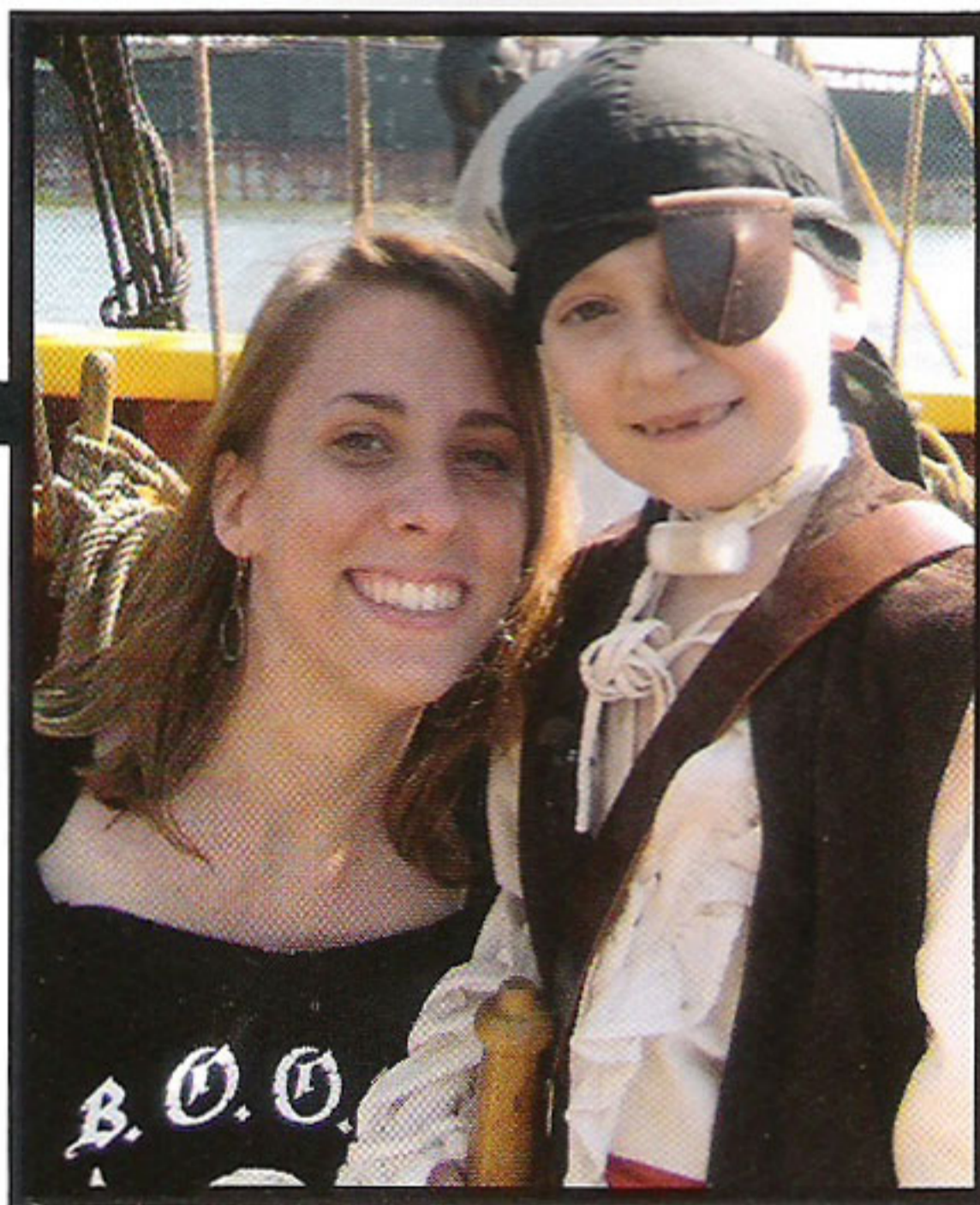


PHOTO COURTESY OF JASMINE BRENNEMAN

And I tell them that I try not to dwell on the hard times, but what happened to him has shaped who I am as a person."

Still, when she thinks back to her life three years ago, she's sometimes surprised she was

able to do it all. "It's one of those things where you never know how you're going to react until you're put into that situation," she says. "You take it moment by moment, and you take it in little chunks."

What really has helped, she says, is SuperSibs!, an organization that raises awareness of the problems facing siblings of children with cancer. "It's an amazing organization," she says. "They send me a care package each month with a newsletter filled with writing from other siblings of cancer patients. Sometimes they'll send a journal to write down thoughts. It was a lifesaver. I don't know what I would have done without it."