



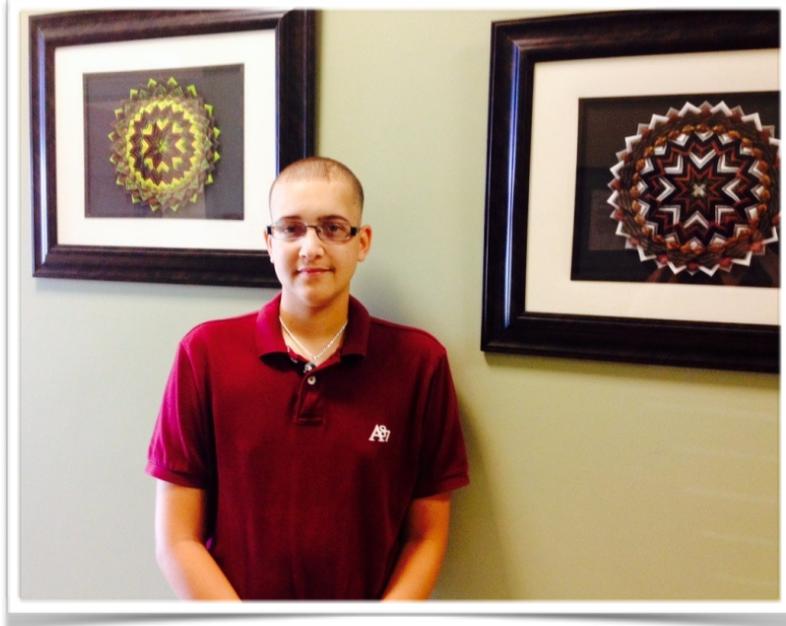
Lumbee Teen Makes Strong Recovery

State Recognized Tribe coordinates cancer treatment and survivorship services for membership

Throughout the Lumbee tribal territory, health disparities are extremely high. Contributing to the high rates of these several conditions, members face a number of obstacles preventing earlier detection and treatment. However, one tribal youth overcome all barriers and is now helping other members facing some of the same challenges that he does.

Mr. Triston Lowry is a prime example of a strong, positive and energetic native youth. Triston has been a member of the LTNC Boys and Girls Club since the age of seven and has been an active tribal volunteer for the last year. He recently graduated high school, has a job

working for the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina (LTNC) as a Customer Service Representative and will be attending college in the fall. Once you meet him, he's a very hard young man to forget. However, Triston is also a brain cancer survivor.



Barriers to proper medical care, including low income, unemployment, lack of medical insurance, distrust of non-Native physicians, and delay in seeking medical attention, contribute to health disparities among Lumbee Tribe members. Health issues are often left untreated until symptoms become unbearable and emergency medical assistance is needed.

Challenge

Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina members face obstacles preventing them from receiving adequate medical treatment. Challenges including, low income levels, extremely high unemployment rates, lack of medical insurance, distrust in non-native physicians and delay of seeking medical attention, contribute to the many health disparities facing the Lumbee people. With so many barriers facing members, this contributes to the many health disparities and premature death rates throughout the tribal territory. Disparities including, diabetes, heart disease and cancer are left untreated until symptoms become unbearable and emergency medical assistance is needed.

Solution

Although these challenges are evident in the most recent county health assessment, not all tribal members fall into the categories above. In the case of Triston, his earlier detection saved his life and the referrals received assisted not only him but his entire family unit. After visiting his pediatrician for migraines, his physician ordered a CT scan the next day. Once the scan was completed and reviewed, a large tumor was discovered wrapped around his optical nerve. Triston was immediately transported by helicopter to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill hospital, where he underwent brain surgery, chemotherapy and radiation during the next twelve weeks. Unfortunately due to the size of the mass and its location, the tumor could not fully be removed. However, Triston is cancer free.

Referrals were made to a rehabilitation center, local support group, and American Cancer Society resources.

Upon receiving his treatment, his physician referred him and his family to several outside agencies to assist in his recovery efforts. To assist in his physical therapy, a referral to Southeastern Rehabilitation Center was given. Also, to assist his family in what to expect, referrals to the American Cancer Society and to a local family support group was arranged. Finally, to ensure that he continued his education, referrals to the county school board for an at home teacher.

Future Directions

Since his diagnosis, Triston has been a huge advocate in the Lumbee community for promoting early detection screenings and proper medical checkups. He works hard to educate others about his experience and serves as a big brother to tribal youth who have been diagnosed.

Recently the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina received a grant from the state promoting healthy lifestyles among the tribal membership. A large component of that program is center around early detection of cancer and cancer survivorship. In addition, the program assists members in enrolling in Medicaid, acts as a referring agency to physicians and additional resources that are available.

Triston will be involved by telling his story and providing counseling. Triston stated, "I've learned that a person can do anything if they put their mind to it. God has allowed me to be here a little longer and I'm not going to live my life without helping others, because so many people helped me and my family. It's the least I can do."



Written by April Bryant
Program Manager
Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina

For more information, contact the
Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina
www.lumbee-tribe.com

Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina is instituting a program promoting healthy lifestyles among membership with an emphasis on early detection and cancer survivorship.