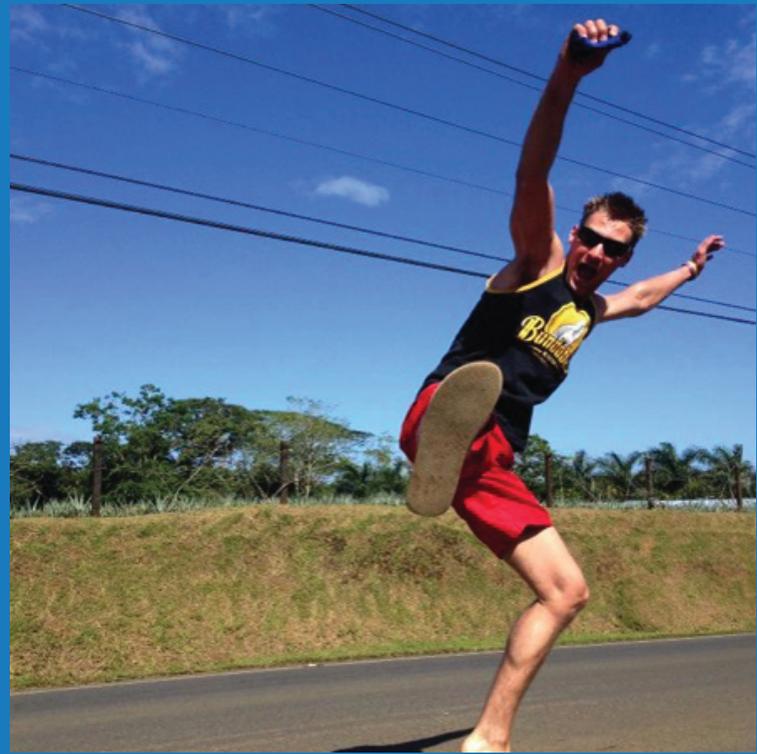


FD ALUMNI SCOOTER

[NATE POST]

“DOCTORS AND MEDICINE KEPT ME ALIVE, BUT IT WAS FD THAT REALLY SHOWED ME HOW TO LIVE AGAIN.”

[BIOGRAPHY]



December 2008, I was invincible. I was 22 and had just graduated college with a great job lined up amidst the recession so to celebrate, I headed to South America for a surf trip. Everything was perfect. I have always made a point to be healthy. I run triathlons, don't smoke, don't drink much and hadn't had so much as the flu in 8 years.

That's when the aches and pains started. I found myself in the middle of South America on my own unable to hold down food and could hardly sleep, let alone hike several miles to a surf spot. Of course, being the tough guy came up with a million excuses for these symptoms: I've been doing too many 24 hour bus trips. I've been sleeping in hostels, the beds have to be hurting my back right? I've probably shouldn't only eat steak in Argentina...maybe some salad will help.

Needless to say, after three months of this, I ended up back in the States with symptoms that had only gotten worse to the point where I had lost 30 lbs and only was comfortable in a hot tub to take pressure off my back. One day, my mom found me vomiting blood all over the bathroom floor and she took me to the ER immediately.

Doctors were at a total loss. All they knew was that I had massive tumors that completely encased my abdomen, wrapped around my aorta, invaded my liver and lungs... unofficial diagnosis – screwed. After a few days the official diagnosis was Advanced Stage 4 Choriocarcinoma.

“How is this possible?” is all I could think about. Nobody in my extended my family had ever had cancer – I didn't even know anyone with cancer... so how is it possible that I did? And what about my perfect plan? My great job that was lined up, my future – everything literally disappeared in a matter of minutes. Long story short, the next 18 months involved over 200 hospital nights, 99 units of blood, 12 rounds of chemo, 2 aortic bleeds, a full aortic resection and countless doctors and surgeries – not exactly what I was thinking my first year out of college would look like.

The craziest thing though was at the end of it all I was cancer-free; declared medically stable... all of the sudden my life went from trying to survive each day to trying to truly live again. And that's when it hit me. How am I supposed to go back to the adventurous, fearless, ambitious 'pre-cancer' Nate? I was alive, physically healthy but felt like a complete shell of what I was before.

I was so overwhelmed with trying to restart my life that I became helpless. Severe depression set in. That's when I found First Descents. Finally, a group who was genuinely excited about not just being alive, but really living! Doctors and medicine kept me alive. But it was FD that really showed me how to live again. They helped me find that person I knew before getting sick and for that I am forever grateful.

[CONTACT ME WITH ANY QUESTIONS!]

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