



Malik BYRD

Four-year-old Malik Byrd loves to start his days like a superhero. For him the very best breakfast is anything eaten while sitting in his Spiderman chair at his Spiderman table with his Spiderman cup, plate and spoon – while wearing, of course, his Spiderman pajamas.

At home in Sioux City, Iowa, Malik tears around the house like a typical, energetic 4-year-old. Sadly, his playtime is often cut short by painful episodes brought on by Sickle Cell Disease, a genetic disorder that affects Malik's red blood cells. When the aches and pains aren't too bad, Malik calls it "Mommy pain," and knows his mother can help him through it. When the pain get unbearable, Malik calls it "Marlys pain," and knows it's time to go to St. Luke's Regional Medical Center where his favorite nurse, Marlys, is always there to make Malik feel like a superhero again.

Though there is no cure for Sickle Cell Disease, the ongoing treatment Malik receives potentially prevents dangerous complications and keeps the disease in check. Because of the great care he's received at St. Luke's, Malik thinks he might want to be a "doctor who helps kids with their blood" when he grows up – but only if there aren't any openings for a superhero.



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