

## [Anchor intro]

Sometimes, it doesn't take much to make a child happy. But when they're going through treatment for a life threatening illness like cancer, they need every positive experience they can find.

The cancer unit at Arkansas Children's Hospital recently started a program called Beads of Courage. The goal is to make the battle against that horrible disease, a little easier to take – while also telling the story of each child's journey.

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“This is the bead they get when they're first diagnosed – it's called a kid chemo bead.”

**These** are the beads of courage.

Bright, glass beads in every color. Dozens of colors – and dozens of meanings.

They're given to cancer patients at Arkansas Children's Hospital -- to mark every step of their journey – every step of their battle to get well.

[CG=Kay Kirk, RN / Arkansas Children's Hospital]

“Every time they've been an inpatient and have a dose of chemo, or they've come to clinic – sometimes as often as a couple of times a week – the beads really add up.”

“These ones are for getting poked.”

“These ones are for losing your hair.”

Six-year-old Corley Day won against his cancer -- but recently it returned. He receives a purple heart for his first battle – and another for the journey he's about to begin.

“You get an act of courage bead because you relapsed. You deserve a bead because you have to go through this all over again.”

Beads are given by nurses, social workers and ministers in pastoral care. They offer a bead for bravery, but their heart for support.

Almost every cancer patient who visits the unit takes part in the Beads of Courage. Many have hundreds of beads – most have thousands.

“This was for an X-ray.”

“Two red ones mean I got 2 units of blood while I was in the hospital over the weekend.”

“That was all within the last week.”

{CG= Richard Herring / Cancer patient}

“You hold up that big string of beads and say ‘look what I did.’ It shows us how much courage these little kids have because it’s amazing that some of the even younger kids have more beads than me.”

Seferina Martinez sums up her feelings easily.

{CG=Seferina Martinez // Cancer patient}

“When I put them on, it makes me very beautiful!”

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The Beads of Courage program has been so successful in the cancer unit, that the nurses have started their own string of beads -- representing everything from years in the cancer unit to working with a patient who is considered cured.

Arkansas Children's Hospital is one of 13 children’s hospitals in the U.S. that is taking part in the program.