

Elizabeth Grace Tennyson "Lizzie"

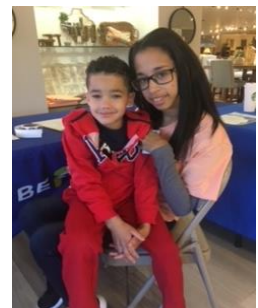


Lizzie was born in Temple, Texas on December 5. She did not know it at the time, but she was the answer to so many prayers. She left the hospital in the arms of a social worker, but she landed in the arms of her mother, Susan, on December 17, when she was just 12 days old. Forever after, December 17 was "Gotcha" Day. She was baptized as Elizabeth Grace Tennyson in January of 1998, attended by so many friends and family. Lizzie went by several names when she was little before she chose to be called Lizzie when she started sixth grade. She was Elizabeth, or Miss E, through kindergarten. When she started first grade, she was called Missy.

Missy showed a great love for animals early on and learned to walk holding on to the family's Great Dane. She cuddled with the Dachshund and readily loved each rescue dog and cat that came their way. She entered the Ballet Austin Academy in 2001 when she was 3, and she danced in the Ballet Austin production of The Nutcracker for two years. Her picture was even on the side of the Butler Dance Studio in downtown Austin for several years under the title of "Dream." Missy loved school and excelled at Math and English. By third grade, she was doing long form division by hand for fun. Missy heard a bagpipe band at the Renaissance Festival in Magnolia one year and ended up taking bagpipe lessons from the Austin Silver Thistles Pipe Band. She later turned those lessons into playing the clarinet in sixth grade band.

Lizzie loved to take summer road trips with her mom. They visited many states and enjoyed being out doing things together. Just getting in the car and driving to a new place was exciting. Lizzie wanted to travel to Europe as she got older, and that was a plan for the future. She was able to go to Costa Rica with her Spanish class in 2013, and she learned a lot about herself during that trip. When she came home through the airport, her mom didn't even recognize the young woman walking toward her. Susan was looking for her 17-year-old in a tee shirt and cut offs, and Lizzie was wearing a Costa Rican sundress and wedged heels. She looked like she was in her 20s. The fact that Lizzie looked so grown up was absolutely delightful to her. She never tired of telling the story that her mom didn't recognize her because she changed so much on that trip.

In 2010, Lizzie met her birth father and his family. He had contacted the adoption agency and Susan agreed that it would be good for Lizzie to know her dad. In July of 2010 they met at the adoption agency in Killeen. Lizzie's dad, Chad Davis, lives in Killeen, and her grandparents are Sandra and Ronnie Skinner. At Thanksgiving that year, Lizzie met almost 100 people to whom she was related. She was so happy to meet everyone and having a lot of cousins was the icing on the cake. Lizzie has a brother, Derick, born in 2014. Derick became the light of her life and she loved him so much.



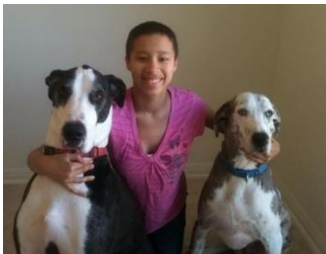
Lizzie started sixth grade at Wimberley Junior High. She joined the band, learning the clarinet. She continued with advanced math and English. She attended pep rallies and decided she wanted to be a cheerleader. Her mom wanted her to achieve a few goals before trying out for cheerleading, and Lizzie did reach those goals. Lizzie started running track in seventh grade. She was a sprinter and ran hurdles with grace and ease. All those ballet lessons had taught her to clear those hurdles as if she was doing grand jetés across the dance floor. In 2011, when Lizzie was in seventh grade, she got the flu. The doctor said it was a viral flu and not bacterial, but the flu didn't seem to go away quickly. Lizzie did try out for cheerleading and made the team. She kept working hard at school to keep her grades high, kept running track, playing with the band, and continued working hard on learning cheers. She was tired, but she and her mom both attributed the tiredness to all her activities.

The day after school was out for summer in 2011, Lizzie went to the doctor. The doctor believed that Lizzie may be anemic and so blood tests were run. The tests showed almost no white blood cells, and there was a concern that she may still be fighting the viral flu that started in February and had lasted through March. Lizzie attended cheer camp amidst all the appointments for lab tests, CT scans and diagnostic appointments, but by the last day of camp, she could barely jump and had no strength left. Following a bone marrow biopsy on June 15, 2011, she was told she had acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). Instead of the summer road trip, Lizzie was having a port placed in her chest for chemotherapy. Instead of attending eighth grade, she was fighting for her life.

For the next 9 years, Lizzie was in treatment, in remission, re-diagnosed, on immunotherapy, on experimental chemotherapy, and fighting to rid herself of the leukemia. She was a fighter, and she never gave up. She was resilient. She continued to live as normal a life as she possibly could. She lost all her hair 3 different times, but she kept going. She spent months at a time at Dell Children's Hospital and spent most of 2018 and part of 2019 in Dallas at Dallas Children's Medical Center. She agreed to be a guinea pig for emerging cancer therapies and she and her mom always believed that she would beat cancer. She worked with Be The Match at quite a few drives to get people to sign up to be a bone marrow donor.

She missed all of eighth grade, all of eleventh grade and half of twelfth grade. Yet, she still marched with the high school band, she was a cheerleader for the last 3 years of high school and she graduated on time in 2014, with her class. She studied on-line and with home-bound teachers. She loved algebra, geometry and trigonometry. She decided to study computer engineering and set her goal to attend the University of Texas in Austin. She attended Austin Community College for two years, doing several classes on-line. She was finally accepted into a computer program at UT Austin in the fall of 2019. The week before class started, her leukemia returned once more, for the sixth time.

Lizzie was planning to participate in a phase three trial study for cord blood transplants. Lizzie had never found a compatible bone marrow donor. As a biracial person, there is only a 14% chance of finding a donor match. She did have some cord blood that was a close match and the study was to treat the cord blood to increase the odds of survival from 20% to around 90%. Lizzie had a severe reaction to one of the experimental chemotherapy drugs in January, which set back a planned trip to the University of Washington in Seattle to prepare for the trial. As she was recuperating from the drug reaction, COVID-19 closed Seattle. But her doctors at Dell Children's found another chemotherapy drug and she decided to try that drug. She never gave up.



Lizzie went to sleep on March 29, surrounded by her beloved rescue dogs (all seven of them). She had talked to friends by phone and email and on-line. She was very tired and planned to ask the clinic for a later appointment time on March 30, so she could sleep a little bit longer. She told her mom good night and that she loved her. Lizzie went to sleep and never woke up again.

Although she left this world before she could achieve all she had planned, she did change the world in very positive ways. Her friends recall her positivity, that she was a good listener, that she encouraged others, and that she was so confident. She made the world a better place for having been in it.