

# Spotlight

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Your gifts save  
lives every day.  
Thank you!

Because of you, Christopher survived. He's shown here with his beloved pandemic puppy, Luna.

Thanks to You ...

## Christopher beat COVID-19, even as he battled leukemia

**CHRISTOPHER HAS HAD LEUKEMIA** since age five — so his immune system is weaker than most.

Now 15, Christopher has already grappled with more health challenges than most of us will face in our lifetimes. A series of difficult leukemia treatments — chemotherapy, immunotherapy infusions, and even bone marrow transplants — caused painful side effects and further compromised his weak immune system.

Despite all this, Christopher is an upbeat kid with

a great sense of humor. His mom, Sandra, says there's nothing around the house that he can't fix. And he worries more about others than he does about himself.

Sandra has a story she likes to tell about what makes Christopher special. "When he was younger," she recalls, "he wrote his letter to Santa, saying that all he wanted for Christmas was to prevent other children, everywhere in the world, from suffering as much as he had suffered. When I read it, it made me cry."

*(continued inside)* 

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“There are no words to describe how terrified I was that he might catch it,” says Sandra. “He is so vulnerable and we were dealing with something unknown.”

### Serious risk for Christopher

“When the pandemic started,” says his doctor, Niketa C. Shah, MD, director of the YNH pediatric bone marrow transplant program, “I instructed all my families to take special precautions. Transplants make the patients’ immunity even lower, so they are at high risk.”

Christopher’s mom, Sandra, was beside herself with anxiety. “There are no words to describe how terrified and worried I was,” she says.

The family followed strict safety precautions. Sandra, Christopher, and his brother Eric barely left their apartment. But Christopher’s dad couldn’t quarantine — he had to go out to his construction job every day.

### A relapse and a diagnosis

And then, Christopher’s leukemia relapsed. Dr. Shah had hoped to minimize risks by delaying any elective transplants — without affecting patients’ health — until after the pandemic. But unfortunately, Christopher’s couldn’t wait. In November, he had a bone marrow transplant.

**What happened next seems almost unbelievable, given what the family had already been through.**

Shortly after Christopher returned from the hospital, weak and tired, a colleague of his dad’s tested positive for the coronavirus. And within days, the entire family tested positive as well — including Christopher.

Dr. Shah was alarmed. “Christopher wasn’t strong so soon after the transplant,” she says. “We hoped he wouldn’t get COVID complications.”

That’s why Dr. Shah had Christopher receive a newly authorized treatment for patients at high risk of dangerous complications. It’s called monoclonal antibody therapy.

And then they waited. “My anxiety was through the roof,” says Sandra. “Every morning, the first thing I did was run to Christopher’s room to check on him.



And he would look at me with a big smile and do some dance moves to make me laugh.”

Christopher recovered — without complications — thanks to this innovative treatment. And Sandra and the rest of the family are coronavirus-free now, too.

**Because of your generous support, Christopher has been able to receive the most advanced care** for his leukemia — and the most innovative treatment available for his COVID-19. The entire family couldn’t be more grateful.

For Christopher, and other kids like him, please give blood at your next local blood drive. You just may save a life. ♥



### You can make a difference for patients with long-term COVID-19

Some patients experience lingering symptoms, long after their infections are gone.

Your generous gift to the **Post-COVID-19 Treatment Recovery Program at Yale New Haven** will help ensure they get the care they need.

Give online at: [givetoynhh.org/covidrecovery](http://givetoynhh.org/covidrecovery)



## CREATIVE GIVING

# Frying and baking their way through the pandemic to fight breast cancer



ON MARCH 19, 2020, Maria Warner gathered all the ingredients she would need to make Nutella ice cream. Then, she taped her phone to an olive oil bottle, grabbed her son, and launched Facebook Live.

**And just like that, two cooking stars were born.**

It started out as a way for Maria to distract her son, 16-year-old Andrew, as they sheltered in place during the early months of the pandemic. As a bonus, Andrew would learn how to cook some of the family’s favorite dishes.

But it quickly grew into so much more.

For 100 nights in a row, Maria and Andrew mixed, fried, and baked their way through eggplant parmigiana, homemade pasta and gnocchi, cannoli, and more — on camera, live.

“It was all about Italian comfort food,” says Maria.

“No grilling chicken breasts or steaming broccoli. Foods you’d make on a weekend — just for fun. We all needed that.”

At first, it was just for a few friends and family who Maria wanted to connect with during the pandemic. But the audience quickly grew by word of mouth through friends of friends — and friends of *those* friends. Before long, hundreds of people were logging in and sending messages of thanks from Maryland, Florida, Texas, and even as far away as Italy.

“My son’s sense of humor kept it very light-hearted,” Maria says. “We didn’t talk about anything serious — just food, and family stories. And the daily ‘little dog report,’ where we filled everyone in on the antics of our two mischievous dogs. It was magic in a bottle for 100 nights.”



Andrew, chef-in-training, and his mom, Maria, are donating the proceeds from the sale of their cookbook to the fight against breast cancer.



### Keep your distance — and don't crowd the pan!

About 50 days into the adventure — and by popular request from their viewers — Maria and Andrew decided to collect all their recipes and self-publish a cookbook. If they sold any, they would donate the proceeds to the Breast Cancer Program at Smilow Cancer Hospital. That's where Maria was treated for breast cancer in 2017.

Thankfully, Maria is in great health today, and she wanted to show her gratitude. “The care at Smilow was amazing,” she says. “It was like a warm blanket, keeping you safe during your entire care process, from beginning to end.”

Andrew came up with a punny title for the book: *Don't Crowd the Pan*. It's a play on Maria's words of wisdom about proper frying technique — words that apply just as well to social distancing in the time of the coronavirus. It contains nearly 70 of the pair's favorite

recipes — old and new family favorites from *pasta fagioli* to *Nutella-filled donuts*.

Andrew and Maria are thrilled that, as of the end of March, they've sold nearly 100 cookbooks and donated more than \$1,300 to the Breast Cancer Program.

Now that we're out of quarantine, Maria is back at work as a clinical technologist in a tissue typing lab at the Yale School of Medicine, and Andrew is back at Notre Dame High school, where he's finishing his junior year. They no longer have days of unstructured time for planning and filming a cooking show.

But **you can still learn to cook their recipes and fry, bake, and eat to beat breast cancer**, like Maria and Andrew. Buy *Don't Crowd the Pan* — and the proceeds will go to the Breast Cancer Program.

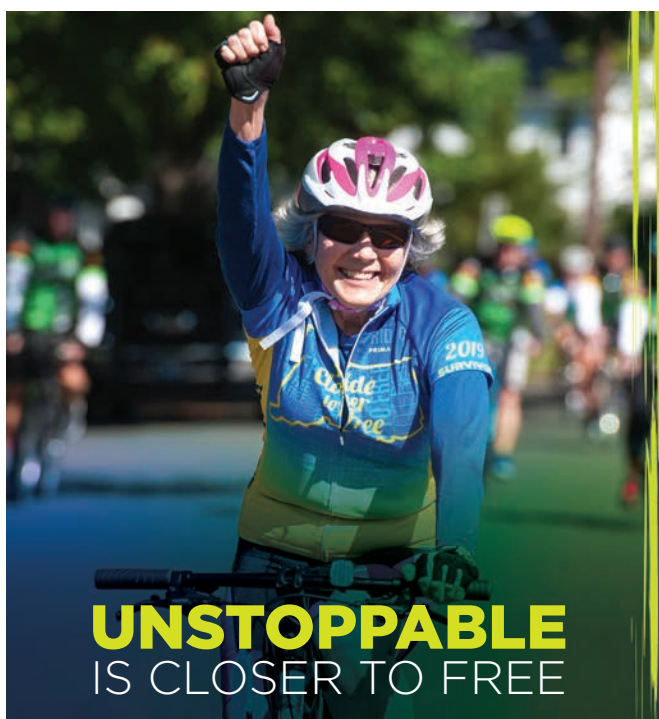
Thank you, Maria and Andrew, for your creativity, compassion, and generosity!



### Buy your copy of *Don't Crowd the Pan: Kitchen Adventures During Quarantine*

All proceeds from the sale of this book will go to the Breast Cancer Program Fund at Smilow Cancer Hospital to thank them for helping Maria during her breast cancer treatment and help others struggling with breast cancer. Buy it at:

[warnerkitchen.com/buy-our-cookbook](http://warnerkitchen.com/buy-our-cookbook)



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