



**Eight Families Affected by
Flu Deaths of Young Ones**





The Jackson Family

MARQUES JACKSON

On December 24, 2003, 5½-month-old Marques Jackson, Jr. came down with a fever and a runny nose – symptoms of what his family thought was just a common cold. After a visit to the doctor, it was determined that Marques had influenza. Over the next 24 hours, the severity of his symptoms progressed. Marques began having trouble breathing so his parents called 911. As Marques was being rushed to the hospital he suffered from several small strokes. Marques died in the hospital from complications of influenza on December 28, 2003, just four days after his first symptom appeared. Because of his young age Marques could not get vaccinated against the flu.

This tragedy has made Marques' mother and grandfather crusaders for yearly influenza vaccinations. Today, every adult and child in their family gets vaccinated against the flu.



The Kanowitz Family

AMANDA KANOWITZ

On the morning of Saturday, February 28, 2004, 4½-year-old Amanda Kanowitz developed a cough and a mild fever. She stayed home and spent the day playing her favorite games with her family. The next morning, she began vomiting, but appeared to have nothing more than a typical virus.

By Sunday evening, Amanda appeared weak and her lips started to look gray. Amanda's mother called the family doctor, who told her that she had received over 60 calls that weekend about the same virus, and that Amanda would be okay as long as she stayed hydrated. The doctor recommended that Amanda only drink several sips of water at a time, and that her parents should make sure she continued to urinate.

At 3:30 a.m., Amanda woke her parents because she was concerned that she had drank an entire cup of water, instead of just taking sips. She then told them she had a stomachache and urinated in the bathroom.

Just four hours later, at 7:30 a.m., Amanda's parents found her lifeless in her bed.

To honor Amanda's memory, the Kanowitz family has established the Amanda Kanowitz Foundation, which is focusing on research to identify which other children should be considered high-risk for such sudden, extreme reactions to the flu and other infectious diseases. For more information, please visit <http://www.amandakfoundation.org>.



The Lastinger Family

EMILY LASTINGER

On the afternoon of January 28, 2004, 3½-year-old Emily Lastinger took a long nap and began to show signs that she was feeling ill. Strep throat had been circulating around her preschool, so Emily's parents kept her home from school and took her to see her doctor to make sure she was ok. However, a nurse performed a nasal swab test on Emily and determined she had the flu. She was given anti-viral medication in the hope that it would lessen the severity of the illness, and her parents were told to keep her hydrated and to control her fever.

On that Friday and over the course of the weekend, Emily became progressively worse. Her fever spiked and she began to vomit. However, Emily's pediatrician reassured her parents that these symptoms were a normal part of the flu and to just continue to make sure she stayed hydrated. Throughout the weekend, Emily continued to vomit and had trouble holding down fluids. Her parents again contacted the pediatrician's office, but they were reassured the symptoms were normal and were told to bring her in on that Monday if they were still concerned.

Emily did not improve over the weekend so on the morning of February 2, 2004, Emily's parents scheduled a doctor's appointment for later that day. The physician instructed them to administer fluids every 15 minutes until Emily was brought in to the office. After she was bathed and dressed for the doctor's office, Emily laid down in her parents' bed to rest and watch TV. She was found lifeless 15 minutes later.

Once her parents found Emily, they immediately began to administer CPR. Forty-five minutes later in the emergency department, doctors were able to get her heart started and then transferred Emily to a local children's trauma center. For 12 hours, doctors tried to fully revive her but the damage to her system was too great. Emily died later that evening.

The autopsy revealed that in addition to influenza, Emily had pneumonia with a painful complication called an empyema (a collection of pus or fluid in the cavity between the lung and surrounding membrane). Emily had not been vaccinated against the flu.



The McGowan Family

MARTIN MCGOWAN

On February 8, 2005, 15-year-old Martin McGowan took an afternoon nap before trying out for the high school baseball team. His mother noticed that he looked a little under the weather, but Martin insisted that he felt fine – there was no way he would miss the highly-anticipated tryouts. Martin attended the baseball tryouts, but was exhausted afterwards. He also complained that his legs hurt from running. When Martin got home, he watched a little TV and went to bed.

The next morning at 2:30 a.m. Martin's mother heard him vomiting in the bathroom. He had a fever of 102 degrees. His mother gave him some medicine and he went back to bed. Martin later awoke at 4:30 a.m. and began to vomit once again. The pain in his legs had also increased. In addition to giving Martin plenty of fluids, his mother tried easing the pain in his legs by giving him a warm bath and applying ointment to the area, but nothing seemed to work. As the aching in his legs worsened, Martin's mother called the doctor who suggested that either Martin come in for an appointment that afternoon or his mother take him to the emergency room. Martin said he needed to go to the emergency room.

When he arrived at the hospital, the ER doctor took his vitals and did an initial evaluation. By this time, Martin's lips were white so they administered an IV. Martin was tested for influenza, which came back positive. He was also diagnosed with Compartment Syndrome – a disease that attacks the muscles, limiting blood circulation and causing severe pain. The intense running that Martin had done the night before escalated his condition from muscle aches to Compartment Syndrome in his legs. The doctor explained that if the blood flowing to Martin's legs ceased for an extended period of time, they might have to amputate his legs. Martin needed to be operated on as soon as possible.

Martin was taken into surgery that afternoon. However, during the surgery, his heart stopped beating. Doctors attempted to revive him but they were unsuccessful.

On February 9, 2005, Martin died of complications from influenza just 24 hours after his first symptom appeared. Martin had not been vaccinated against the flu.

In memory of Martin, the McGowan family has established a Scholarship Fund to coincide with Martin's love of baseball. The family is setting up the M.A.R.T.I.N. (May All Receive Their Immunizations Now) Flu Foundation. The non-profit organization's purpose will be to provide information to eliminate the misconceptions of the influenza virus so that individuals understand the importance of immunization. The foundation will achieve its mission by educating parents, children and athletic groups about the seriousness of the flu and its complications.



The Moise Family

IAN MOISE

In early December 2003, 6½-month-old Ian Moise began showing signs of being sick. He awoke from his morning nap and vomited. His parents took him to the pediatrician and were told that it appeared that Ian had the flu. The pediatrician said that if his symptoms did not improve to schedule a follow-up visit. As the evening wore on Ian's breathing became labored and his temperature increased. His parents decided to take him to an urgent care facility that specializes in children. That doctor told them that Ian had tested negative for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), but tested positive for influenza. His parents were told to treat his symptoms and follow up in 48 hours if he did not show signs of improvement.

After a long night Ian's parents thought he seemed to be getting better. His breathing was not labored; rather it sounded more like a sigh. His temperature had also dropped. They thought the worst was over; however, Ian went into respiratory arrest on that Wednesday afternoon. They administered CPR and Ian was transported to the hospital. The doctor and staff worked to revive him, but all of their efforts failed.

Ian died on December 17, 2003 of complications from Influenza A, approximately 30 hours after he showed his first symptom of being sick. Ian and his two older brothers, Sean and Ryan, had received the first of two doses of the influenza vaccine two weeks prior to Ian becoming sick.

In memory of Ian, the Moise family has established Ian's Rainbow Flu Foundation, which is helping to educate people about the seriousness of influenza. For more information, please visit <http://www.iansrainbow.org>.



The Palmer Family

BREANNE PALMER

During the evening of December 20, 2003, 15-month-old Breanne Palmer developed a slight fever and began to show symptoms similar to her brother who had recently been diagnosed with influenza. The next morning, Breanne's fever rose to 101.5° F. Her parents took her to the pediatrician where the influenza diagnosis was made. Breanne was given antibiotics and sent home.

After visiting the doctor, Breanne took a long nap and her temperature began to slowly come down. Her parents continued to monitor her condition and give Breanne medication for her fever. When Breanne went to bed that night her temperature was almost normal. However, as the night wore on, Breanne's temperature climbed again very rapidly reaching 105.5° F. Her parents put Breanne in a bath to help bring down her fever, but she began to have difficulty breathing so they called 911.

At the hospital, Breanne's temperature rose to 107° F. Her temperature was brought down by the doctors in the emergency room, but Breanne had to be transferred to another hospital for more intensive care. A special life-support machine was needed as the virus began to attack Breanne's heart and brain stem. However, after being transferred to yet another hospital, doctors told Breanne's parents that the damage to her young body was too extensive. There was nothing the life-support machine could do. Breanne died in her mother's arms on December 23, 2003 from Influenza A.

Breanne's parents tried to get her vaccinated against the flu in early December but because she was diagnosed with an ear infection at the time her pediatrician would not vaccinate her.



The Stein Family

JESSICA STEIN

During January 2002, 4½-year-old Jessica Stein and her brother, Eric, caught a virus that was going around their preschool. Like many of their fellow classmates and even some teachers, Jessica and Eric missed a few days of school, but recovered shortly thereafter.

By the end of the month, Jessica had completely resumed her daily activities. She attended a birthday party and played with her friends at a local park. She had begun napping in the afternoons, which was unusual for her, but otherwise appeared healthy and happy.

On that Wednesday evening following the birthday party, Jessica developed a mild fever and began vomiting. Her parents kept her home from school the next day. When they contacted her doctor's office, the nurse said Jessica had likely suffered a relapse from her previous illness, but she did not need to see the doctor. By that Friday, her fever began to subside and she somewhat regained her appetite, although, she was still weak, very tired, and fussy. Her breathing became labored that night and her hands and feet were cold. Jessica's parents contacted her doctor again, and he advised them to bring her to the emergency room in case she had become dehydrated and required an IV.

The doctors ran various tests on Jessica, and a pediatric cardiologist was called. After several hours, they determined her heart was a little enlarged, but it beat strongly. Jessica's parents were to be allowed back into the examination room to see her. Five minutes later, Jessica's heart stopped beating. Doctors attempted to revive her, but were unsuccessful.

On February 2, 2002, Jessica died of viral myocarditis. An autopsy was not conducted to determine what type of virus caused Jessica's ultimate death; however, viral myocarditis is linked to Coxsackie B and adenoviruses and can also result from the flu.



The Yaksich Family

ALANA YAKSICH

On the afternoon of February 2, 2003, 5½-year-old Alana Yaksich spent the day with her parents and brothers watching movies, eating sundaes and playing. Although she had a low-grade fever from a recent sore throat (for which she had finished a course of antibiotics), Alana enjoyed the afternoon feeling healthy, surrounded by her family. Later that evening, Alana developed a 106° F fever and was rushed to the emergency room.

Within 24 hours of her arrival at the local hospital, Alana died of flu-related complications that caused swelling and injury to her brain.

Because of this tragedy, Alana's parents plan to educate other members of the community about the importance of childhood flu vaccination.