

On January 2nd, 2001, our daughter Kaitlyn (Kati) entered the world on her own time frame. She was a beautiful brown eyed girl with a smile that could capture your heart. At about 14 months, we knew that something wasn't right with our sweet toddler who was wobbly when she walked and couldn't sit up without tipping over. At 2 years of age, Kati was diagnosed with a rare genetic disease called Ataxia Telangiectasia (AT). As we read about the disease, we realized that our lives would be forever changed. Our little family was heartbroken to hear that by the age of 10 she would be in a wheelchair. At the age of 12 Kati was diagnosed with Large B Cell Lymphoma. Every possible scenario that occurred in a child with A-T happened to our daughter. We grieved the loss of mobility and the cloud of immune system issues that would plague her body.

Our family loves the outdoors and the activities that the mountains provide. At the age of 3, a neighbor who was an NSCD volunteer instructor took Kati out on a sit ski on a warm April day. She loved the freedom that being on the mountain gave her. During her school years, we would ditch the classroom for a day of skiing. Kati liked being in control and "skiing" on her own. She mastered the "slider" which enabled her to stand ski with supports. After realizing the limitations of the slider, she decided she had a love for the ski bike. With the help of her cool and fun instructors, she was able to explore all of Winter Park. She loved breaking the rules and taking her instructors up the Panoramic Express to the top of the mountain. They would giggle and laugh on the chairlifts while singing the latest Taylor Swift songs. Almost every birthday was spent skiing or doing something with the NSCD.

Kati not only skied with NSCD, but she also participated in the programs offered on the front range. Kayaking in Golden, horseback riding in Granby, rock climbing in Clear Creek Canyon or paddleboarding at Bear Creek. She was an inspiration to other participants who were fearful of heights or speed. She would challenge her fellow campers to join in the fun.

One of the highlights of the year was volunteering at the Wells Fargo Cup. After a full day of skiing and a wry smile, Kati could talk guests out of \$20 bills during the banquet. She loved to fundraise for her favorite organization. For two years in a row, she was the top fundraiser for the Vertical Challenge. She would be the first person on the chairlift and the last one in to get the most vertical feet in a day. She was featured in news interviews and videos for her favorite charity.

In 2022, Kati skied 22 days. She has skied more in a season than many people. In May, she participated in the Adventure camp where she rock climbed, kayaked, and hung out with her people. NSCD was a part of her life until she passed away on June 10th, 2022. Last September, a group of over 30 people (most of her favorite NSCD instructors) hiked her up to the top of Panoramic Express. We spread her ashes on a crisp beautiful Fall day. A military flyover screamed over our heads and the clouds formed a special heart in the sky. As we hiked to the top of the mountain, we laughed about our favorite "Kati" stories. Kati, with the help of NSCD, has made an incredible impact on so many people's lives. We are so blessed to be a part of this family.