

## Getting to Know....

### The Sluzewski Family

Written by Vic Gideon

"We witnessed a miracle," says Beth Sluzewski, whose almost 13-year-old daughter Charlotte is undergoing treatment for ovarian melanoma with the support of the Saint Ann School and Communion of Saints community.

"This really has been a fantastic community for us personally," says Bill Sluzewski about the parish that rallied around his daughter, diagnosed in February but the family only making the diagnosis public in June. "It started with the school and then Father Marshall was there within twenty-four hours."

Charlotte, Beth, and Bill headed to pray for Charlotte at the Rhoda Wise House and Grotto in Canton on Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup> after they received news about the severity of the cancer and reached out to Father Marshall, who called, offering a date in the middle of the next week for a prayer vigil at the church.

"Monday," Beth told him without hesitation. "Because we knew we had an appointment already on Tuesday."

The prayer service for Charlotte on June 9th rivaled an Easter Vigil in attendance and had another 300 watching on YouTube.

"It was amazing," adds Beth.

Amazing, like Beth and Bill's winding path to Cleveland Heights and COS which covers nearly every part of Ohio. Beth grew up in Oak Harbor in Northwest Ohio. Baptized Lutheran before entering into the full communion with the Catholic Church at three, she attended Oak Harbor Public Schools and received her sacraments at St. Boniface Catholic Church, then attended Kent State University and Cleveland State University for her degrees. She worked as an Early Intervention Service Coordinator for Help Me Grow before staying home with the kids and is now heavily involved as a parent volunteer with Saint Ann School.

Cincinnati-native Bill moved to Hudson before first grade, where he then attended Hudson Public Schools and was a member of St. Mary Catholic Church. Bill was baptized at St. Aloysius Church in Bridgetown, Ohio and attended both Xavier University and John Carroll University for his degrees.

The couple met in Kent where Beth was bartending. They soon discovered they were both heavily involved in youth programs at their respective churches in high school. They started attending Mass together shortly after meeting and

got married at St. Boniface Catholic Church in Oak Harbor on October 4, 2008.

Shortly after their marriage, the Sluzewskis moved from Twinsburg and Ss. Cosmas & Damian Church, where former St. Ann pastor Father Jim Singler's twin brother John was pastor, to St. Ann, where Father Jim did the baptism for their oldest at his last Mass. They're now raising three children in the Heights, 16-year-old Greyson, a sophomore who plays linebacker at Benedictine High School, and Theodore, 11, a sixth grader at Saint Ann School, who says he likes basketball.

"I'm a theatre kid," says Charlotte, the middle child and only girl, now in seventh grade, who also says she's journaling about her cancer journey, which has tested the family's motto #FAITHOVERFEAR.

"I'm still actively going through treatment," Charlotte says of her battle after University Hospitals doctors removed a tumor the size of a cantaloupe. "I forget what it's like to feel completely normal but I definitely probably felt as normal as I can since February."

The family has always relied on faith but it's now an even more important part of their lives,

"I think faith has always been important to us and even more so since all this had started," says Bill, a Philanthropic Advisor with the Cleveland Museum of Art. "And Charlotte is the one in all of this that's had the strongest faith of all of us, who have never doubted that things would work out okay."

Of all the things they've experienced, there's one thing the family wouldn't change: their parish.

"St. Ann, Communion of Saints, St. Philomena have been just wonderful communities to be a part of," says Bill. "They've been huge in our spiritual growth, and the growth of our kids through Saint Ann School."

"This is an incredible place with incredible people," he adds.

"It really is a community and it's definitely a diverse community which is great to see," says Beth. "It's a lovely place to be a part of."

