



PRESS RELEASE

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Portland Aquarium to Donate Half of All Admissions on May 16 to Boy's Cancer Research Goal**

**The unlikely but profound friendship of an eight year old boy Nathan Mullanix and Natalie Hill began he was six and she was 15. Suffering from the effects of a battle with bone cancer, Nathan vowed to help Natalie any way he could. Among other things, he raised thousands of dollars in Natalie's name for cancer research, and is even more passionate today about continuing his valiant cancer fund-raising efforts to honor his bond with Natalie.**

In 2011, Natalie Hill, a gregarious, outgoing, 15 year-old, Coos Bay, Oregon girl with bone cancer was looking at a potentially grim future. Already rearing the painful effects of ostoesarcoma, an amputated leg reminded her of her daily battle. With that sinking feeling that comes to all when such a sad tale is told, a deeply compassionate six year old began a crusade that would not die with his new friend. Rather, her life and example strengthened and reinforced his resolve. Nathan's mother and father beamed with a mixture of pride, humility, and awe as they shared his last birthday party request – to forego the party and have anyone who would buy presents put those funds towards his new singular mission. Yes, a 6-year old boy is capable of that sense in the gut and that level of sacrifice and compassion. He found out

about Natalie on Facebook and vowed to do everything in his power to help her. All signs indicate she would be, or is, deeply gratified and proud of his efforts.

Nathan first had a lofty goal of raising \$200 for Natalie's bucket list with a lemonade stand. He raised \$1,000. A year later, a dentist was collecting Halloween candy from children for the troops at \$1/pound, plus a bonus of \$200 to the person bringing in the most candy. Nathan spent hours trick-or-treating and raised \$500. Thanks to Nathan's bucket list fund raisers, Natalie enjoyed visiting Alaska to see the Northern Lights, went to Hawaii, got a tattoo, met Taylor Swift, visited Chuck E Cheese, and had a boy sneak through her window.

You would think once Nathan's initial project was complete, he would feel satisfied he had done his part. Think again. Nathan heard about Relay for Life. Through this organization, he raised \$3,800 his first two years and aims to raise another \$5,000 this year to become their 2<sup>nd</sup> largest fund-raiser. He already knows he can't make first place, as Natalie herself has raised in excess of \$14,000 this year and will take the number one spot. Sadly, Natalie's cancer returned in her lungs and after participating in some experimental cancer treatments, lost her battle in 2013. Her parents are completing her year of fund-raising for her.

Nathan became the best of friends with Natalie during her last two years. He stood in line for her for over six hours at the midnight release of Breaking Dawn - Part 1 so she could have a good seat. Nathan is now eight, is still passionate about his fund-raising and wants Natalie to "look down on me and be proud". She was 17 when she passed away, and their age difference didn't matter. It is that bond of friendship and unusual compassion that continues to drive him now, and will drive him well into the future. "When she was really sick, I won an online contest where Natalie and I were the first to ever feed the Lorikeets at Portland Aquarium. I'm glad we took pictures together that day. They remind me of her and make me want to raise more money than anyone else."

Portland Aquarium will host 8 year-old Nathan Mullanix and his lemonade stand on Friday, May 16 from 10am-8pm. Half of all ticket sales that day will be given to Nathan for Relay for Life. Aquarium managers and Nathan are

expecting to push him into the top three fundraisers in the state. If you would like to introduce your family to a true hero, visit the aquarium May 16, meet Nathan and enjoy a refreshing glass of lemonade, and help him become second only to his beautiful friend Natalie in his mission to contribute to cancer research.

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***About Portland Aquarium:***

*[Portland Aquarium](#) provides children and families access to the excitement and learning opportunities of the ocean without the long trip to the coast. Guests can watch jellyfish float and glow, admire the bright and colorful corals, feel the soft ray on their fingertips, interact with tropical birds and reptiles, ... all within easy reach of home. Portland Aquarium offers multiple educational programs and events for kids, as well [as Behind-the-Scenes tours](#) for those curious about what it takes to keep an aquarium in good working order. Favorite programs include [Birthday Parties](#), [Sleep with the Sharks](#), [Octopus Encounters](#) and [Morning Rounds](#).*

***About Relay for Life:***

*[Relay for Life](#) is administered by the American Cancer Society, who is a leading funder of cancer research. They also provide funding for travel expenses for families of someone undergoing cancer treatments.*