

## “Stay Positive”

### A Family’s Story

On Valentine’s Day 2016 Erika Burgos took her family for an outing to the mall in Amarillo, where her fourteen-year-old son, Eddy, suffered a severe headache, vomiting and the loss of his vision.

They quickly returned home to Portales. The next day, Eddy’s brain was scanned, locating **an ominous mass** and he was taken immediately to a hospital in Lubbock where surgeons biopsied his brain and found a cancerous tumor.

That is when Eddy’s family discovered Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Southwest. For families with hospitalized children, **they provide a support system** that includes lodging, meals, shuttle services, laundry, a caring staff and much more.

“We had to get a hotel room during the first two weeks,” Erika explained. **“We ran out of money for a room,** and then we found out about the **Ronald McDonald House.**” Their services alleviate huge financial burdens for families.

“It was the biggest blessing during treatment,” Erika said.

Erika and her husband, Gabriel Ramirez said the **Ronald McDonald Family Room** at the hospital was also a big help. “Having my husband there so one of us could stay with Eddy was important,” Erika said. The other could use the RMHC Family Room in the hospital to shower, have coffee and take a break.

Erika recalled one night when they went to the Ronald McDonald House. “Eddy turned to me and said, ‘I am so glad we put our change in the Ronald McDonald collection box **because now I really need it.**”

The ups and downs of such a serious illness put a **tremendous amount of stress** on Eddy’s family. “In our family, everybody’s life has been turned upside down,” Erika said, explaining that Eddy’s two younger sisters have missed a half year of school. However, **they are grateful** for the care they have received from Ronald McDonald House Charities, she said, “It is an amazing organization.”

Recently they learned that Eddy has a new tumor, Erika said, and he’s experiencing painful headaches, loss of vision and pain in his bones.

It’s been a long, harrowing process for Eddy and his family. He had advice for other teens struggling with cancer: **“Stay positive** throughout the process, this will definitely help make things a little easier. Always try to smile. Believe that God is going to help you and your family get through the tough times.” This is what gives him strength as he continues to bravely fight his battle.

