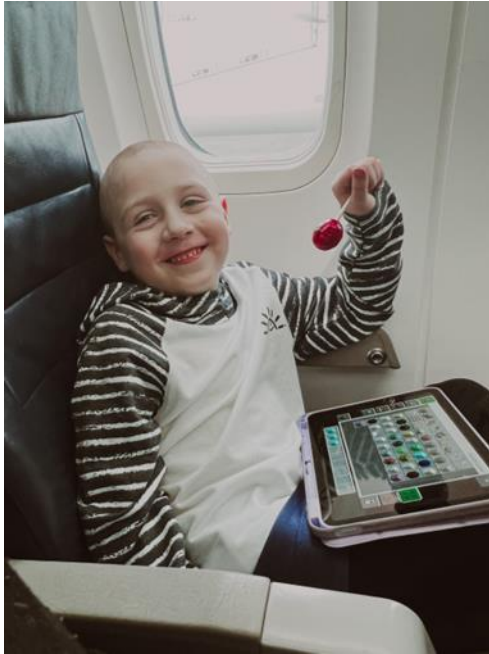




Atticus' story



In August of 2020, when Atticus was just three years old, he went through an unresponsive episode and the next morning he was struggling to speak.

It was not until Atticus and his mother travelled to BC Children's Hospital, where more tests were conducted, that he was diagnosed with what doctors presumed to be myasthenia gravis (MG).

Atticus' diagnosis meant he and his mother, Brittney, would have to travel from Kelowna to BC Children's Hospital in Vancouver, regularly for frequent treatment and follow-up visits to ensure the treatment plan would help manage his myasthenia gravis.

Brittney had first heard about Hope Air when they were air transported to Vancouver and had no vehicle to get home. With so many uncertainties at that time, she had her sister pick them up in Vancouver. But later when they learned

they would have to travel to Vancouver more regularly, especially in the winter months, Brittney decided she would try Hope Air.

Hope Air has been able to provide Atticus' family with flights and accommodation for their travel to Vancouver. When the Hope Meals and Hope Rides programs launched in spring 2022, they were also able to utilize those programs and receive meal vouchers and Uber vouchers to assist with the cost of their travel.

"I was so relieved," says Brittney. "The first times it was flights, and I didn't know there were accommodations and then it was here is your flight, accommodation, meal vouchers and Uber voucher to and from the hospital, it was a godsend."

The trips to BC Children's hospital often entailed testing and IVs for Atticus. An aspect of the trip he never looked forward to. Because of the funds Atticus' family was able to save with Hope Air's support, Brittney has been able to provide fun activities outside of the hospital for Atticus to help manage his anxiety around his hospital visits and give him something fun to look forward to.

"Because of Hope Air I was able to have the little bit of money to take Atticus somewhere and do something fun instead of having to sit in a hotel room and think about his appointment, it helps him relax before we have to go [to his appointments]," says Brittney.



Sienna's Story

At five weeks old, Sienna's parents noticed a concerning lump on her neck. They took her to the ER, but the doctors dismissed it as just a normal virus. However, the lumps didn't go away, and more concerning growths appeared all over her body. Alarmed by this, her parents sought medical attention from a family doctor in Timmins, who recognized that it was not a typical childhood illness. Sienna would need to be air ambulated to the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) in Ottawa.



For a month, Sienna and her mom remained at CHEO, undergoing test after test, as the doctors worked to uncover the mysterious illness. Sienna was later diagnosed with Langerhans Cell Histiocytosis. She would require intensive chemotherapy and steroid treatments, along with a feeding tube, to fight the aggressive disease. Though it would be a long and difficult road, Sienna's parents remained by her side, taking up residence at the Ronald McDonald House for four months as their little girl bravely battled her illness. Her condition improved

significantly, and she was able to return home before her next treatment.

The trip from Iroquois Falls to Ottawa placed huge stress on Sienna's family. *"Without Hope Air we would have had to stay in Ottawa for the entire year with family. There was no way we would be able to drive, the 10-hour trip with a baby turns into three days, it wasn't worth it"*. During these trips, Sienna experienced a fever and even a mini seizure, adding to her parents' fear and pressure. Constant worry about the travel burdens weighed heavily, especially given Sienna's young age.

Sienna's parents learned about Hope Air from their personal link nurse, which Sienna's mom described as a game-changer. *"It really opened our eyes to how easy it makes it when everything is provided for you. You just go, do your thing, come home, and don't have to worry about anything. Travelling every three weeks would have been impossible to do, both of us are on EI (employment insurance) so it means the world of difference for sure."*

The doctors are positive that Sienna will be able to live a normal, healthy life after completing this course of treatment. To manage these frequent trips to CHEO in Ottawa, Sienna's family has relied on Hope Air for transportation support every three weeks. *"Hope Air makes a huge difference because Canada is a very widespread country with lots of people and a lot of different remote places that can't always get to where they need to go for all these kinds of things."*