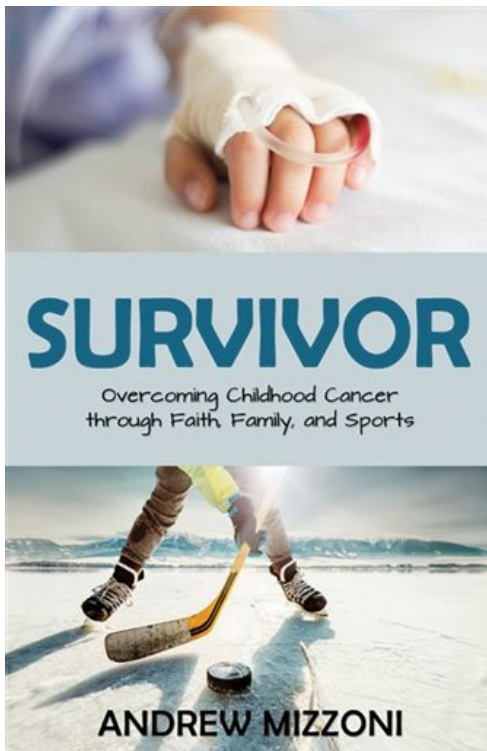


King native shares his personal cancer journey in new book



By Mark Pavilons

The grim statistics indicate we will all be touched by cancer in some way in our lives. A King native has decided to share his unique cancer journey, in the hopes of encouraging others to be resilient and coming out on the other end as better versions of themselves. Andrew Mizzoni's book, "Survivor, Overcoming childhood cancer through faith, family, and sports" will be out soon. His life changed forever in an instant. "I remember walking down the stairs in our home when my mother said suddenly "Stop! What happened to your eye Andrew?" That morning my mom saw a bulging under my left eye which then propelled us into doctor's office after doctor's office. Eventually, I was rushed to SickKids Hospital where I was told that I had cancer. I was only 9 years old and I had a very rare and fast-growing soft tissue cancer called Rhabdomyosarcoma." Mizzoni said after a day of testing to see how much the cancer had spread, the family was blessed with the good news that it was contained in his orbital area. He was given nine months of chemotherapy, five weeks of radiation, with a few surgeries sprinkled in between. "I went from having fun with friends and playing rep hockey as a goalie, to spending countless nights and day in the halls of a hospital and vomiting up to eight times a day. I lost my hair a few times, but I didn't mind. My family was very supportive, with my dad spending most of the duration with me while my mom took care of my two brothers. Throughout the whole process I stayed positive, and just wanted to get back to being a normal kid again." Finally, his treatment was complete and he was in remission. That was, until a follow up CT scan revealed some cancerous spots. "I was back again at SickKids for five more months of stronger chemotherapy medicine ahead. This medicine made me very sick. After a failed attempt to remove my tumour through surgery, we had no other choice but to attempt a radical exoneration surgery, which involved removing the tumor and all the surrounding tissue, including my eye. The surgery was a success and I was released from SickKids two days later. I was now in my 11th year and my cancer was gone, but the pain lingered on for years afterward." Mizzoni said his family was inspired shortly after his diagnosis to raise money for SickKids Hospital. "Our fundraisers were supported with open arms by the community, family and friends and even celebrities. Over the years I have had the honour of meeting sports legends like Johnny Bower, Curtis Joseph, Ed Belfour, Ken Dryden, Vince Carter, Pinball Clemons and have had the support of many others. At this year's golf tournament in King, the Andrew Mizzoni Cancer Research Fund will have

raised over \$500,000 for cancer research. Andrew was inspired to write this book by his high school guidance counsellor and mentor, Mr. Fraser. "I wrote it because I feel my story will provide hope for people who are in my shoes today, and their families. Over the years I have mentored several children who have had the same surgery as me. This is a scary time in any family's life and it is comforting to know that there is a light at the end of the tunnel." Despite the turmoil and trauma, Mizzoni has a rather interesting take on things. What was meant as "harm," "God uses to your advantage, he believes. "My journey has been difficult, but I wouldn't have it any other way. It's made me into the best version of me. I am resilient, truly grateful and any future challenges pale in comparison. I am a proud survivor!" A person's mind set is very important when battling cancer, he pointed out. "As a child, I didn't have the worries that most adults do, such as worrying about statistics and wondering if I live to see my kids. I truly just wanted to get back outside with my friends and play again." His advice: "maintaining a positive mind set is very important and crucial. Having a great medical team like I had is very important. Keeping up with eating right and exercising to take your mind off of your treatment is also important. And finally, a strong faith in God. Remember to laugh often." Today, he's stronger than ever and his faith never waned one iota. "The first thing I do before my feet hit the floor is thank God for each new day. I don't take moments and opportunities lightly and I savour them. I am blessed to have such an amazing family, wife, career, great health and the opportunity to make a difference." The book will be released April 30 and available wherever books are sold. You can pre-order the book now on Indigo or by visiting www.andrewmizzoni.com It's published by Word Alive Inc., one of the largest and most trusted suppliers of Christian books, entertainment, and giftware in Canada. They represent over thirty publishing houses in the Canadian market of Christian bookstores, trade bookstores, such as Chapters/Indigo, Costco, Superstores, and Wal-Mart, as well as thousands of churches, ministries and schools.