“I felt angry when my wife was diagnosed – her illness seemed so unfair”

**Chris’s wife Erin** was diagnosed with cervical cancer in 2014 and died three years later, leaving Chris to care for their three children. He tells us how the family have coped with their painful loss.

 “I don’t think we ever really spoke about how Erin wanted me to raise the children – not properly. But she always wanted them to do their best and not hold back – she believed you should give your all to everything. Our daughter Javen, who’s 17, is very much like her – the way she does certain things, the way she speaks, her voice. Sometimes it throws me.

“Erin had been diagnosed with cervical cancer in 2014. I was so angry when we first got her diagnosis. Then, for a while, she seemed to recover. So when the cancer returned, this time in her liver, we were devastated. We were told her cancer was terminal and we couldn’t help but think ‘Why us?’ We decided then that she was going to cram in as much as she could until her time ran out.”

## Wedding bells

“We met when Erin was 18, and Javen came along quite quickly afterwards. I’d proposed in 2011 but, for one reason or another, we’d never got around to actually getting married. So when we found out Erin’s cancer was terminal, we knew we had to make it official. As far as we were concerned, we’d already been ‘married’ for years.

“We tied the knot in our living room in May 2017, with just a handful of close family present. We had our reception down at a friend’s farm a week later. Erin was mad about horses, and our friend had been kind enough to let her look after and ride one called Lucy. We had a lovely day and spent a lot of it outside, which is where Erin was happiest.”

## Superstar nurses

“Towards the end, we had three regular Marie Curie Nurses who came to our home to look after Erin. Rachel, Barbara and Sam were superstars. I still see them – Barbara lives nearby and popped in at Christmas with sweets for the kids. Our daughter Amelia was only three when she met the nurses and although she is shy, Barbara and Rachel made time to play with her to make her feel comfortable around them. That was great.

“As Erin’s illness took hold, I realised I couldn’t do all of her care myself. Every evening a Marie Curie Nurse would come – just for an hour or two, but it made a huge difference. We invited them into our home and we looked forward to them coming. It was Erin’s last month and they made it so much easier.”

## Saying goodbye

“Erin died on our son Zak’s 12th birthday, which was hard. It’s been very difficult for all three of the children. Javen has been a star – she’s been like a second mum to Amelia and managed to sit her GCSEs exams soon after Erin died. Despite everything, she got good grades. I couldn’t be prouder of how they’ve all coped.

“Erin knew exactly what she wanted for her funeral – she picked out the songs and wanted everyone wearing bright colours. I decided to do a skydive to raise money for Marie Curie as a way of saying thank-you for everything the nurses did for us. I raised over £3,000 and got to tick something that Erin and I had dreamt of doing off our bucket list.”

*Source: https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/blog/chriss-story/225079*