



OCTOBER 16, 1989 – JUNE 14, 2007

Chris Johnson was born on October 16, 1989, the second of three sons, to Ovie and Pat Johnson. At an early age, he was an energetic, happy, people-loving child who appeared to never meet a stranger. He always sought to make others smile and share in his happiness.

Chris's desire to play football blossomed in middle school, and he eagerly looked forward to playing and developing his athletic skills at Northside High School. During his freshman year, he worked hard to excel as a defensive end on both the junior varsity and varsity football teams. He was excited and truly honored to get playing time on the varsity team as a 9th grader, and he even commented early on to his parents that he and his Northside High teammates were going to "get us one," referring to a state football championship. No one could have known the validity of his words then!

Sadly, in the summer of 2005 Chris was diagnosed at the age of 15 with acute lymphocytic leukemia, requiring him to undergo extensive chemotherapy. He achieved remission in August 2005 while still receiving chemo. Although he was unable to participate actively on the football field, Chris remained devoted and supportive of his teammates by attending games and traveling with them to as many games when physically possible. His positive attitude, courage, and determination in battling cancer motivated the football team to play even harder during the season.

Trouble came again when his cancer recurred in April 2006, but he remained determined to beat cancer, achieving remission again in June 2006. As the year progressed, his prediction of success for the NHS Eagles became a reality when Northside won its very first State AAAA Championship in 2006! Chris attended the championship game and was able to celebrate this monumental event with his team and coaches. The joy he experienced was indescribable! However, his joy tragically was interrupted when cancer returned yet again in January 2007. Despite a courageous fight, he succumbed to the disease in June 2007 at the age of 17.

While his time on earth was brief, Chris's uplifting spirit and bravery touched the entire community through his hope, determination, and strength. He served as the driving force behind the NHS football team as they dedicated their 2007 season to him and vowed to "Make It Happen" for #96 Chris Johnson! Their perseverance paid off by winning a second back-to-back State AAAA Championship in 2007, in honor of their fallen hero. Although he did not get to graduate with his 2008 class, Chris's legacy as a true Northside High School Eagle lives on in the memories and in the hearts of the Northside High School family and all who were blessed to know him!