

"Prepare to be in the US for a period of 6 to 8 months", read the letter from Dr. Kurtzberg informing us of the length of time it would take for Yousef's cord blood transplant. A million questions zoomed through our heads as we prepared for our trip from Kuwait to Durham, NC. The hardest part was telling our children.

Each of my kids had a reaction that went along with their personalities. Dala, my 17 year old daughter gulped, "you're going to miss my Junior Prom?" Deema just looked at me with eyes filled with sorrow. Kareem stood in his Spring concert costume. My 6 year old son, Ahmed whispered "You're leaving us? Does that mean you don't love us anymore?" What could we say to these innocent children? We reassured them of our devotion to each and every one of them, but the truth was, we were not going to be one big happy family for a while.

There is no question that it was well worth the sacrifice. We arrived on April, and not a day passed without Yousef asking when his brothers and sisters would come.

The June 13th reunion with Yousef was a touching event. There were tears, kisses and hugs everywhere. The nurses stood there, mesmerized by the childrens' emotion for their baby brother. Yousef was so excited, he didn't know what to do. Once over the shock of seeing them after a 3 month absence, Yousef stretched out his arms and simply said "hug me!"

-- Mae, Duke PBMT Parent