



**By Carolyn Lee**

***The Imperial Republican***

About 300 people, which is one-seventh the population of Imperial, welcomed 15-year old Makenna Wallin home Monday, as they lined the road leading to her family's house.

Sporting orange "Team Makenna" t-shirts, orange handkerchiefs and spirit sticks, the crowd sustained applause as the Chase County Schools sophomore was driven through the crowd by parents Jeff and Marilee Wallin in a yellow convertible loaned by a friend.



Children "accidentally" let go of balloons, brother Justus held up a "courage" sign while balancing on the shoulders of high school teacher Chris Sander, and great-grandfather Olan Wallin hugged Makenna part way through the line of well-wishers.

Doctors have told the girl that she is in 100 percent remission from AML.

Makenna was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia just before Christmas 2012.

Since that time she has spent nearly all of four months at Children's Hospital Colorado in Denver, going through four rounds of aggressive chemotherapy.

Each round consisted of 10 days of chemotherapy, followed by monitoring for blood counts for 18 days at the hospital. She was then discharged for a week each time to be with family.

Marilee said Makenna will have spinal tap and bone marrow taps May 8 to make sure there are no more leukemia blasts. In another few weeks the tube that fed the chemotherapy will be taken out of her chest.

Makenna will continue to have monthly, then less frequent checkups, in the future.

AML starts in the bone marrow, or the soft inner part of the bone. The bone marrow cells don't mature the way they're supposed to, turning into white blood cells. The immature cells just keep building up.

The rally at the Wallin house Monday was coordinated by friend Lynn Luhrs, who persuaded the school staff, coaches and teams, hospital personnel and others to turn out to welcome Makenna home.

Makenna and Marilee were unaware of the rally. Jeff intercepted their car as they were about to approach the house and switched them to the convertible.

As the crowd dispersed, the Wallins entered their home to enjoy time together as a family.