



Profile in **Courage:**

It takes a child to raise a village... at least that's what some of us are starting to think about Aaron Gaberman.

**Aaron Gaberman**

by Susan Farewell  
Photos by Bruce Ando

**When** I was first contacted by the editor of Weston Magazine to write an article about this ten-year-old Weston Intermediate School student, I had no idea what I was about to get into. No idea of what a privilege it would be to meet him and his mom. I soon learned that anyone who has been in his life this year or the last couple of years, feels the same way.

On May 25th, 2005, after five months of wondering what was physically wrong, Aaron was diagnosed with two non-germinomatous germ cell tumors, an extremely rare illness. Since then, under the care of Dr. Jeffrey Allen of the NYU Medical Center, he has undergone a series of treatments as part of a new clinical research trial. He is just the third person in the country to get this protocol. And now, a bit over six months

later, the tumors are gone and he's come through with flying colors.

While you'd assume the world would stop for Aaron and his family when the diagnosis was made, quite the opposite happened. Through unflagging faith, a determination to succeed, the outstanding work of Doctor Jeffrey Allen, the indefatigable work and strength of his mom, and ongoing support and encouragement from his dad and brother, Aaron has marched on, continuing to play baseball (his number one passion), the violin, and to be an outstanding student and a good friend.

Perhaps most remarkable about Aaron, however, is what he has taught everyone around him. While it is so easy to live self-centered lives in our busy Fairfield County communities, this young man has shown many how to embrace one day at a time and enjoy it to the fullest.

Here's just a sampling of what some have to say about Aaron\*:

*"His spirit elevates us all to become focused on the most important aspects of life — family, fun and helping our neighbors."* Jeffrey C. Allen, MD., Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology at NYU Medical Center. Dr. Allen is one of the founders of the Children's Brain Tumor Foundation. He lost his own son, Justin, from a brain tumor in 1980, just shy of his seventh birthday.

*"I don't treat Aaron differently from any other kid. He comes ready to play at every practice and game. He has a true passion for baseball and gives his full effort at all times."* Peter Schaffer, baseball coach of The Cubs, winners of the Weston Little League Fall 2005 Majors Championship.

*"His perseverance is amazing. Every day, he is one of the happiest kids."* Kelly Farrell, Aaron's fifth-grade teacher at Weston Intermediate School.

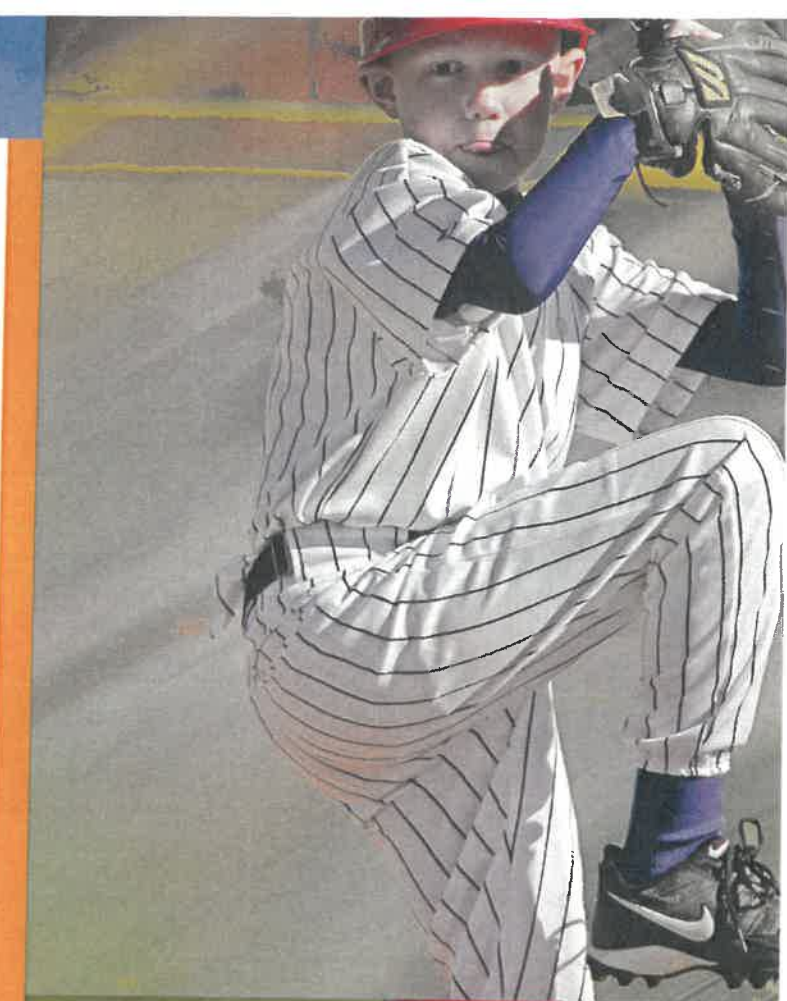
*"Aaron has not allowed this disease to get the better of him. [Throughout his chemo treatments] he continued to show up for practice with his hard plastic helmet/hat and declared 'I am ready to play, Coach Ameer.'" Charlie Ameer coached the Ten Year Old District All Star Team from Weston, which Aaron was on during the summer of 2005.*

*"He's such an inspiration. Kids really respect him."* Lois Miller, Health Teacher, Weston Intermediate School. Aaron made two presentations to the fifth grade, explaining his illness and the medical procedures he was having.

*"He is supremely courageous. Amazing in his positive attitude and how he has handled this illness. A trooper. It's never about feeling sorry for himself. He educates himself with what he's going to have to deal with. His bravery is almost catchy. He takes the lead and is so comfortable."* Vicki DeLuca, Aaron's guidance counselor, 4th and 5th grade.

*"Even on the days when Aaron would arrive dressed head to toe in his baseball uniform, obviously excited over the game that would follow his lesson, he would never be distracted from the task at hand. At such a young age, the focus that Aaron exhibits will surely help him to recover."* Marthe Ryerson, violin teacher.

*"He's a joy. He's eager to learn and grow, become a better player. The fact that he played baseball during the period of not feeling well, before he was diagnosed, is amazing. When he was going through nasty medical treatments, he was more upset about not playing baseball."* Coach Eric Tyson, who coached The White Sox in the Spring of 2005.



*"I have been absolutely amazed at his attitude... his ability to cope with this with seemingly endless faith. I had a bug in September and he came to my house with soup!"* Reverend Dr. Bernard Wilson, Norfield Congregational Church, friend.

And Mom...

*"Aaron's dream is to one day play MLB and to wear the Yankee pinstripes. Every New York Yankee has a story. This will be his."*

Of course, everyone I spoke to also had amazing things to say about Aaron's parents, Mark and Teri Gaberman, and their older son, Jonathan. Rabbi Leah Cohen, at Temple

B'nai Chaim in Georgetown said it all, however. "The Gabermans are a living testimony to faith. This is a family that is mustering all the forces of good and choosing to live in hope and light." Aaron has just completed treatment in Boston at Mass. General Hospital where he has undergone proton beam radiation five days a week for six weeks. The Gaberman family are happy to be together again at home in Weston, just in time for the holidays. *W*

*Susan Farewell is a Westport-based author and journalist.*

*\*Please note that due to space limitations, it was impossible to include comments from everyone we spoke to. Aaron is widely loved!*

