



TRISTAN VARNER **11 YEARS OLD**

Motto: "Don't Survive, Live Life"

High School Team: Hutto - Cheer

Champion Teammate: Mitch Gaylord

At 6 weeks old we were told that Tristan had a life threatening birth defect called intestinal malrotation; his entire digestive system failed to rotate in utero and thus was backwards. At 8 weeks old he underwent three surgical procedures including an appendectomy, a Ladd's procedure, and a Meckel's diverticulectomy. While the procedures could not correct the deformity, they would prevent further life threatening complications.

At 12 weeks old doctors began to suspect that something else was still wrong. We spent the next 3 ½ years watching Tristan's health progressively decline as he underwent intense testing. One organ system at a time his body was shutting down until in January of 2009 our doctor shared that we needed to quickly find a diagnosis or we were going to lose our son. In February, an MRI revealed an incidental diagnosis of Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis, and finally in March a diagnosis of Lyme disease was discovered. The Lyme was successfully treated, but he continues to deal with the JIA in his hips, knees, ankles, and TMJ. He's had to fight since day one, but it has given him a tender heart and compassionate spirit. He pours 110 percent into everything he does and he simply loves life!