

Last night, Ava Holder, who was diagnosed with Stage 4 Neuroblastoma, passed away peacefully surrounded by her family. She was five years old.



Ava's mother, Chrisie Funari, wrote: "While our hearts ache we are also so proud of Ava. She fought so hard for 3.5 years. She did not lose. Ava stayed calm and composed and true to herself. Yesterday she was still being herself using her manners including please and thank you. She was ready and we did our best to support her. She did not want to be in pain anymore. She transitioned to heaven on her own terms and for that we are thankful. I am proud of our family and the support we gave Ava. I am proud to be Ava's mom - she changed my life, along with the lives of so many others. I am going to miss her every day. Always"

This time last year, four-year old Ronan Thompson also passed from the same cancer. His mother, Maya Thomspson, launched rockstarronan.com, a personal blog from Maya to Ronan etched with raw emotion and fierce insight on this widespread killer among children. We asked her to share a comment on Ava's death. This is her response:

"Words fail me today. It is not often, that I am at a loss for words. There are no words good enough to say to someone when their child dies. I know this all too well. Nothing will take away the pain, the sadness and the never ending trauma of losing something that is irreplaceable. The loss of a child is something no parent should have to endure.

I may not have words today, but what I do have is enough anger, passion, and sadness, to help me to continue on in this fight against childhood cancer. I will not stop until the number one disease killer of children, starts to get the attention it deserves. My Ronan did not deserve to die. Ava, did not deserve to die. No child does. I am left here, on this earth without my son, to continue this fight. I made a promise to him that I intend to keep. I will forever fight until the face of childhood cancer, starts to change. For Ronan. For Ava. And for the thousands of others names I now know, but so wish I did not.

Childhood cancer needs a voice. I intend to scream as loudly as I can, until people start to wake up and listen. Please take a time out today, hug your kids extra tight, and be thankful for all that you have. Please send your love, prayers, and strength to the Holder family as they will need it now, more than ever. Please stop looking away. I know all too well, that this can happen to anybody's child, at any point in time. We need better treatments and better odds of survival. Or else this deadly cycle will just continue on. This is not acceptable. These children's lives are at stake. If you are going to be passionate about something in life, please take a second to read my story and I will give you something to be passionate about. Ronan and Ava should be here, on this earth, playing together and nowhere else.

I am so sorry and if my heart wasn't already broken, it would be shattered into a thousand pieces, once again.

Maya Thompson

RIP Ava Holder (2007-2012)

Written by Kirstina Bolton

Mama to Ronan Thompson forever almost 4"

Thompson also launched theronanthompsonfoundation.com in an effort to raise support in researching a cure for this killer. Let us be the voice of awareness for this disease and fight it once and for all.

To read a personal account from one of our writers on Ronan, check it out [here](#).