



## Country artist Drew Baldridge's new song, "Tough People," pays tribute to resilient kids like St. Jude patient Lizzie

With her eyes sparkling and a bright, happy grin, Lizzie, a patient at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital®, could barely contain her excitement. She was about to meet country music artist Drew Baldridge.

Drew was excited, too. He was there to share something close to his heart, his [Top 10 single "Tough People"](#) a tribute to people who get through life's hardships and come out on the other side.

"We wrote it for people like you," Drew said to the enraptured 9-year-old.

"Thank you," Lizzie said with a smile.

At 20 months old, Lizzie was diagnosed with hypothalamic/optic pathway pilocytic astrocytoma, a slow-growing brain tumor. She received nearly three years of treatment at a Texas hospital. When her tumor grew back in 2021, she was referred to St. Jude, where doctors tried multiple treatments until one involving a new drug protocol worked.

"We were just happy to have a place to go that we had an option, because at that point we felt like there was no other option," said Lizzie's mom Mary.

Lizzie completed her treatment in October of 2023.

Back when Drew and the co-writers began work on "Tough People," he was going through tough times himself. He'd lost his record deal, his manager and booking agent.

It would become his fight song, with the hook: "Hard work pays off, good beats evil and tough times make tough people."

Then, Drew visited St. Jude in Memphis, Tennessee. A dad himself to a young boy, the visit to St. Jude was poignant.

"And I saw these kids fighting for their life. And their parents right next to them along on that journey," he said. "And I knew we had to put them in the song. And this had to be a big part of our song."

It's the second verse, which refers to a patient with stage two cancer. The disease might be different from Lizzie's, but the journey is similar.

Mary and Juan, Lizzie's parents, are grateful that the journey they share with so many other families is part of this moving anthem.

"It really strikes a chord, and it really reflects the struggles," Mary said.

Lizzie, who is taking weekly piano lessons, was "over the moon" about meeting Drew and strumming his guitar. She can't stop talking about him, Mary said.

"If the world had more Drews in it, we would be so much happier," she said.

Lizzie's tumor left her visually impaired in her left eye. She plays in a soccer league with other visually impaired children.

"She also does swim team and enjoys volleyball," Mary said. "I happen to think she's the best artist. She took some art lessons this summer and her drawings are stunning. I feel like I'm bragging. But all of this is possible because of the lifesaving work St. Jude does."

From the doctors and the staff to the kids and their families, "Tough People" is everything St. Jude stands for, Drew said.

"Everybody in that hospital is tough. Everyone is going through something," he said. "I'm glad this song shines a light on them. They deserve it."

###