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Smiling while sending hope

Katie's chronic illnesses don't keep her from her primary goal: to keep smiling while sending hope!

19-year-old Katie has a host of chronic conditions that impact her circulation, digestion, immune system, nervous system, and more. She also has alopecia, which causes hair loss, and frequently wears a mask to keep herself from getting sick. Due to all of her conditions, Katie is a frequent visitor to Duke Children's—but she doesn't let her illnesses dampen her positive personality or her goal of bringing joy to others.

Katie was 17 when she finally received a diagnosis for some of her conditions. She and her family had seen multiple physicians but it wasn't until they came to Duke Children's that they found the attention and care for which they were looking. Katie was grateful to finally receive answers and to start her treatment journey.

Katie is an active member of the Duke Children's Adolescents Transitioning to Leadership and Success (ATLAS) program and has been a fixture at the annual Duke Children's prom. She has an organization called Smiling While Sending Hope, through which she gives back to other sick kids via organizing donation drives. Katie recently graduated high school and will be attending Chowan University in Murfreesboro, North Carolina, where she will study graphic design and communications. Katie's favorite book is *The Hunger Games* and she is active in 4-H and showing rabbits. And though she wishes there were better treatments for chronic illnesses, she loves seeing the bright, shining, and helpful caretakers at Duke Children's—caretakers who are able to continue to provide the best in pediatric care, thanks to supporters like you!

