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**CONTACT:** Mark D. Weinstein  
Executive Director of Public Relations  
[937-766-8800](tel:937-766-8800) (o)  
[937-532-6885](tel:937-532-6885) (m)  
[Mweinstein@cedarville.edu](mailto:Mweinstein@cedarville.edu)  
[@cedarvilleneews](https://twitter.com/cedarvilleneews)

## **Cancer Survivor: “They Told Me I Was a Miracle”**

**CEDARVILLE, OHIO** -- Beating cancer is no small feat, but sometimes learning how to be a survivor is when the real battle begins.

Cedarville University junior Samantha Wisor from Clearfield, Pennsylvania, has learned to draw on her experience surviving a large brain tumor to prepare for a career in [social work](#).

According to the [National Brain Tumor Society](#), an estimated 700,000 Americans are living with a primary brain tumor. Approximately 88,970 people will have received this diagnosis in 2022. Wisor is among 75.7% of patients who survive their diagnosis but are left to cope with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other post survival related challenges.

At 13, Wisor began to have consistent severe headaches, prompting an X-ray and MRI, at the request of her doctor.

“They sat my mom and me down and told me I had a brain tumor the size of a lemon,” she said. “They told me I needed urgent surgery to take care of it.”

At the hospital, nurses and doctors told Wisor and her mother it was the biggest brain tumor they had ever seen.

“The next morning, I had brain surgery to remove the tumor,” she continued. “I was young and pretty much had no idea what was going on.”

Doctors were shocked to hear that Wisor had been able to walk around and function normally, given the severity of the growth.

“I had played in a soccer game the day before; they told me I was a miracle,” she said.

After a strange eighth grade year, full of half school days, when Wisor was 16, she found out she needed another surgery to remove three remaining pieces from the previous operation. She elected to have the surgery over fall break.

“I ended up only missing three days of school after the surgery,” she said. “My teachers thought I was lying until I showed them my scar.”

While her battle against cancer was over, being a survivor proved just as difficult. Wisor was diagnosed with anxiety, depression and PTSD following her surgeries.

“A lot of that stemmed from knowing the second surgery was coming; that made it worse,” she said.

Wisor felt God giving her opportunities in her struggles, though. [Make-A-Wish](#) took her and her family on a trip to Australia and she got to attend [Camp Mak-A-Dream](#) in Goldcreek, Montana, to meet other kids with brain tumors, share her story and minister to others relating to her experience.

Wisor continues to do more than be a survivor, as she plans on volunteering again with Camp Mak-A-Dream this summer, along with using her experiences to prepare for a career in social work.

“I find that I have more of a heart for others due to my experiences,” she said. “All the pain I have gone through has made empathy easier. I know what has been hard in my life, which makes it easier to understand what others are going through.”

Wisor interned with London Middle School serving children in a social work role, using her past as motivation for loving kids well.

“At 13, I had to realize I could die at any time,” Wisor added. “I plan on being there to help in other people’s ‘brain tumor moments’ in the future.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,715 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, including the Bachelor of Science in [social work](#), strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit [cedarville.edu](#).

Written by Alex Boesch

Photo captions:

- 1- Samantha Wisor is a brain cancer survivor, now seeking a career serving in social work
- 2- Samantha Wisor and her family

Photos by Samantha Wisor, Clearfield, Pennsylvania