

## **Rylie's Experience with Team Impact**

### **by Mary Balint**

Team impact is a national nonprofit organization that connects children facing serious and chronic illness with local college athletic teams forming life long bonds.

In October 2016, Rylie, who was four years old at the time, was drafted onto Stony Brook University's women's soccer team. It was love at first sight for all of us involved, Rylie, the players, and the coaches. They started out with inviting her to join in practice with them and proceeded to taking pictures in the green room for the billboards. Rylie was given a locker in the locker room and she wears her uniform proud at all the games. During the home games she goes up with the team captains to meet the referees and other team captains, she tosses the coin with the ref and walks out on the field with the starting lineup. She stands tall with her giant team as they announce her as a starter in the game and have her picture on the billboard. She helps her team during the game by making sure the sideline is clean and organized, she hands out water and ice to those in need. We follow her team to away games, and she runs the field with them as they warm up. Rylie has been invited to parties with the girls and to do other activities on and off campus. The girls have come to soccer games that Rylie plays with her own team, they have also come to school functions to show their support.

If you have the opportunity to join Team Impact, I would say jump on it. It not only changed her life for the better but has also had a major impact on the players of her team. I know Team Impact is located in 49 states. If it is not located in your city but if you call them, they may be able to add your town since they are growing and adding each month.