

## 2017 CSCGP High School Teen Essay Contest

### I'm Doing Okay

By Jina Lim

Key:

Umma (Mom in Korean)

Appa (Dad in Korean)

Jiwon (my oldest sister)

Judy (my older sister)

Hboo (Jiwon's husband, Brother in law)

Ezra (Jiwon and Hboo's baby)

Dear Umma,

Now that spring is in full bloom, I can't help but think of you every time I sneeze and remember how Zyrtec was your best friend. The cherry blossom tree in front of our house is in full bloom. I checked the weather for this week and it says we are in the low 70's, so I guess it's time to do some spring closet cleaning.

Yesterday was Appa's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. He came home late at night from work, but we still managed to celebrate with cake and cards. As the years from your passing progress, Appa gets a little bit more depressed on his birthday. He told us it's because he feels like it's another year he wasn't able to grow old with you.

This morning, I talked with Appa about being a single parent. I asked him if it was mentally challenging. He told me that it wasn't too difficult because we were mature enough to act as a motherly figure towards each other as siblings. He said the only thing that was mentally challenging was worrying if he was being too much of a 'helicopter parent' while wrestling

the two roles. I laughed and assured him he's doing great. I still remember the day I had to go to Costco to shop for pads with him. He stared in amazement at the variety there was. But even today, I know if I ask him to buy a box of *Always* night time pads in size 'extra-long', he will still come home with diapers for seniors. Appa visits you every morning on his way to work. He's made so many friends at the cemetery that I think he will keep for life. Appa is doing okay.

I was in Boston this day last week with Judy. I got to see Ezra for the first time in 3 months and he can now speak in full sentences. Jiwon sat down with me the first night to catch up on all things *life*. She told me she was unhappy with life in Boston, the main reason being she has no family nearby. I told her she needs to pray and ask God for guidance and wisdom before making any moves that are stirred by her temporary emotions. I wish you could see how beautiful she has grown up to be. Who knew she would ever become a mom so soon, right? Ezra is so perfect and I know you would have adored him just as much as he would have adored you. I remember how much you loved boy babies, and Ezra is sure a boy! He loves all things trains and trucks. I even tried introducing him to my favourite classic Barbie movies, but the moment he sees the pink letterings, he tells me to turn it off. I wish you could be here to see how hard Hboo works day in and day out. I wish you could give him a pat on the back and thank him for all he is withstanding. He really is a one of a kind brother in law. Jiwon sheds a few tears at least once a day for you. She misses you more than any of us, to be quite frank. I hope you could be here to reassure her that you're watching over her. That she has so many blessings to be thankful for. Jiwon is doing okay.

Judy is in college now; 2 more months and she will have completed her first year! She lives off of the energy of the people around her. I wish you could see the confident strong woman she is becoming. I wish you were here to see how happy she is to move by her own agenda just like you did. Sometimes she tells me she gets this strange feeling when her friends talk about their moms. How their moms are constantly sending them care packages and know their needs a lot better than their dads could. I reassure her that she has me and Jiwon. Judy gets vulnerable and lonely fast, so she always needs a sense of security. She is no longer depending on materialistic love, but true and faithful friends. I'm so happy that she has

found people that genuinely care for her and vice versa. I am so proud of the independent woman she's become. You would've been too. Judy is doing okay.

Hi Umma. Life has been pretty busy. Since graduating early in January, I got to travel to Mexico by myself for missions. The trip was where I have spent most of my time out of school in, but it went by way too fast. It was challenging but rewarding in so many ways. Like I had mentioned, I got to travel to Boston on my own to see Ezra and am now back to 'school mode' to finalize college decisions and prepare for AP exams that are right around the corner. College decisions have to be made in barely 3 weeks. I'm debating between two colleges where one is 12 hours away while the other is only 50 minutes away from home. My biggest worry about going far is leaving Appa by himself. I wish I could hear your input in all of this. I wish you could see me as I walk on graduation this coming June. I wish you could shop for all my dorm accessories with me. Fast forward to the future, I wish you could be with me to pick my wedding dress. I wish you could meet the person that I will be sharing the rest of my life with and I wish he was able to witness how pure and selfless you were. I'm trying my best to be strong in the family. Sometimes everyone tells me I am so resilient and mature to hold in all my emotions. I'm afraid that it isn't necessarily me holding in my emotions, but more that I am forgetting you. Slowly, I am forgetting how your voice sounds, how your clothes smell, and how you used to smile at me. I miss you dearly, but I feel as though forgetting you piece by piece minimizes the chance of me being hurt. I'm sorry for all the things you had to endure in those last few months. I'm sorry I didn't have the chance to 'grow up' in front of your eyes. I knew that it was never goodbye, but see you later, but why does waiting for later feel like eternity? Thanks for reading this letter. There is so much more I want to say and share, but I feel like they should be saved for when we meet-no matter how long the wait. Don't worry, Umma. I'm doing okay.

Love,

J

Hye Kyung Mun

3/27/1961 – 1/28/2012

Ovarian Cancer 3C