



# 2018 CSCGP High School Teen Essay Contest

Kayla Day

## Sarah's Story

Cancer. The word that ends lives so quickly. Cancer has impacted my life drastically. My longtime friend and neighbor Sarah was diagnosed with leukemia in 2009. Sarah's story was very heartbreaking, with many ups and downs. Being a nine-year-old and getting a phone call saying Sarah has cancer while you're playing soccer was probably the hardest thing you can tell a little girl. All I knew how to do at that point was to cry. I was confused at first because I didn't know what cancer REALLY was. I couldn't stop thinking about how Sarah could have gotten cancer. How could my best friend who I was with every single day have cancer? From that day on my life has changed so much.

Knocking on her door asking her to have a play date was never the same once Sarah had cancer. I would have to wash my hands until I was germ free. Sarah's immune system was very weak and couldn't risk getting sick. A lot of our play dates were at the hospital. Sarah was always getting transferred back and forth from the hospital bed to her own bed. Some days Sarah wasn't herself, she didn't want to eat or talk to anybody. Her medicine and chemo made her super sick. I tried my best to understand what Sarah had been going through. It broke my heart knowing that I couldn't possibly do anything other than pray that she was going to be okay.

Sarah unfortunately lost all her long brown hair. Shortly she was bald. She was very embarrassed and felt out of place. She would always wear hats and beanies. Sarah once had her aunt's wedding to go to and got a wig, so she could feel beautiful. Sadly, Sarah's wig fell off and she was terrified to ever wear it again because she didn't want to feel self-conscious. After hearing that story my heart broke for Sarah.

For a while Sarah had been doing well and was home for a long time instead of spending weeks at the hospital. Everyone's mood lifted. Everyone was so happy for Sarah and that all

the prayers that were said, worked! Sarah's friends and I knew how hard cancer has impacted her family. The neighborhood families would take turns making dinner for Sarah and her family so after the long day they would have, they wouldn't have to worry about making dinner.

Sarah noticed a lot of red bumps. Back to the hospital she went. More weeks and months were spent at CHOP. No one gave up hope. All there was left to do, was pray. When my family would go to visit Sarah, you could tell by look of her parents they were exhausted, scared, and tired and wanted their little girl to be okay. Instead of Sarah getting better, she was getting worse. Sarah hasn't laid in her bed for a while now. The hospital was her new home.

A year and nine months later Sarah lost her battle, in the year of 2011. When you're eleven you should lose a toy or a book. You should never have to lose a best friend. I didn't know how to respond or grieve. I was in shock. Being eleven at a funeral for the death of your best friend was awful. Not saying goodbye was the worse part.

I didn't know how to cope with Sarah's death, so I joined a support group at my elementary school with a bunch of Sarah's other friends. The group helped me a lot and showed me how to deal with my emotions. All the girls got together and created a huge mural in the library dedicated to Sarah with all our handprints and pictures that reminded us of Sarah. In the middle we wrote "Pretty, Pink, Princess", because that's what Sarah was.

Sarah's parents decided to fulfil Sarah's dream and move to a farm house with a view of a horse stable. They wanted to make Sarah smile, even though she was in heaven. We all celebrated Sarah's eleventh birthday in her new house. It was a good feeling to see how happy Sarah's parents were. Even though Sarah was gone, she will always be looking over all of us.

It is now 2018, seven years since Sarah has passed. None of Sarah's friend, including myself will ever forget Sarah and how much her life and story has changed us. She was always the light in the room. She will never be forgotten. Cancer can have such a huge impact on people's live. Unfortunately, Sarah's story didn't even the way we all wanted it too. She will always be everyone's "Pretty, Pink, Princess."