



2018 CSCGP Middle School Teen Essay Contest

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner

Alvaro Urizar

## How I saw my mom become the first person to get cancer in the family

My mom is the very first person to get breast cancer (Cancer in general) in the whole family. This challenge was scary and new not only to my mother, brother and the family but also terrifying because it would mean I could possibly lose my mom and being unable to see my father in another country. My mom handling housing bills, groceries, cleaning, driving me and my brother to certain destinations, going to work for six days a week with coming from little with decent amount of money and making sure I'm productive for everyday life to name a few of the things my mom does to keep me up and going. Cancer was the very last thing we needed with all the pressure I have in my household.

When I found out about my mom's cancer on December 12th 2017, I was sad and depressed because I was afraid she was going to die. The suspense was killing me with the unknown knowledge if i could do anything to help her. As a 13 year old I wasn't sure what to do because I'm unable to work and I'm not physically strong. As time went on with the unknown, All I could do before I found out more about my mother's conflict was to "keep living our lives as normal as possible" as my mom would say. As much as how terrified I was and how my mom was learning to process this issue, I still went to school and my mom continued to keep going to work as normal. Due to almost all my family members living in their home country and around the country besides Pennsylvania, My mom , brother and me thought we would be alone to get

through this journey, but it turns out we weren't with the help of family, friends and people that care in general.

Although my mom was the one with breast cancer, she wasn't just learning how to deal with it, but she was also learning more about Cancer in general and the different stages and types of cancer just as much as I was. When me and my brother think of Cancer, we think of death. Although we were terrified of the outcome and future, we decided to educate ourselves. We learned that my mom wasn't at stage one cancer yet which was a sign of hope for us! We learned that she was going to live and that not everything automatically means death. We learned from a Breast cancer site through the Susan B. Komen foundation that at least eighty two percent of women are likely to survive breast cancer! Not only did that fact give me hope for my mom but also all other females going through this disease. I learned to be patient even with the unknown future while at the same time, learned to be careful with my actions towards my mother's physical health. As my mother kept working and doing her everyday things, I looked at her encouragement as a signal that I want to be liked at too. As much as we would like to hide under the covers, beg for answers, panic and cry constantly, we had to keep going with work and not let this issue interfere with things that are supposed to be fun. We didn't let this conflict get in the way of enjoying family time, holidays, traveling, gatherings and anything that we needed to achieve that was important to us. If anything, it made us stronger.

In conclusion, we didn't just learn and experience this challenge, we conquered it with every strength and tear we could. My mom is now a breast cancer survivor and a advocate to get involved more in the community and to join the thousands to millions of women for the cure and awareness of breast cancer. Not all things are going to be bad and not all hope is lost. It taught me and my brother to appreciate even more what we have now and to keep not taking things for granted. My hope is that anyone going into something similar that my family went through, is dealing with it as strong as me and my brother did, but more importantly, my mother. A mother's love is like gold.