



2019 Ben Strauss Youth Program

Middle School

Teen Essay Contest

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If Cancer Tells You to Give up. Don't

I looked in the mirror at the black dress I was wearing. I didn't want to go to this. Not ever! It was too hard for me and I knew that. These type of things were always a wreck for me. Especially when it was someone I had always cared about. Someone that I had known forever, Since I was four! I closed my eyes tight. It's just a dream. It's just a dream. I walked out of the bathroom with my eyes still closed. I finally opened them, and saw at least 75 people standing in the viewing room, covering their faces to hide their grief.

A week later.

I woke up and turned to my side. My best friend Rylee was still awake, she's never been like this. Not since the funeral. "You okay?", I asked tiredly. "Yeah, it's just hard." She answered. I knew it was because I felt like I lost someone as important as she did. Bob was like a second father to me. A best friend to my dad. Rylee had been my best friend for as long as I could remember, and her dad Bob, along with her family was as important to me as my own family. Then cancer took that away from us. We all ask the same question, "why?" something none of us can answer.

The next day we made breakfast and sat down with a board game. It was strange without that bubbly person in the room. While I and Rylee sat down playing monopoly, I stared into Rylee's eyes and saw that she wasn't the same. She matured with more independence, and grew taller than ever to

show that she could take anything else that came her way. For an 8-year-old girl at the time, she sure was tough.

Flashback...

Rylee and I were playing Barbies when she suddenly stopped. She turned to me with pain in her eyes and said, "My dad's really sick. My mom told me I didn't have to worry about it but... it's getting so bad." I looked at her and finally told her the truth, "Um...Rylee. This is something that I wasn't supposed to tell you but...I think you have to know." My stepmom had told me the secret a week ago. I looked up at her biting my fingernails. "What?" she asked, but I didn't answer. "Uh.. never mind it's probably the best if you didn't know," I said quickly. "What do you mean? He's my Dad, of course, I deserve to know!" She shot back. "Okay... your dad... he um... he has cancer.." I covered my face so that I couldn't see her reaction. "What? That's ridiculous no he doesn't." She nervously laughed. Later on that day she finally came to conclusions that it was the truth. Sometimes reality and the truth was never a good thing. Especially when it means you going to lose someone you love.

The year of 2018.

Me, some of my family (including Rylee) were all sitting in the backyard having a barbeque like we always did. We all laughed as we listened to my Uncle Rick's stories and corny jokes. We all knew that Bob was still there laughing with us. Seeing his daughter accomplish the most spectacular things. Still doing his job as a father in heaven.

Cancer can't control your thoughts. If cancer tells you to give up. Don't. If cancer tells you your too weak. Fight back. If you fall down. Get back up. No marine is as strong as you. Not even the strongest of the strongest. So live! Fight on! And believe!