



2019 Ben Strauss Youth Program

Middle School

Teen Essay Contest

Molly Berdinka

A Tough Battle

My friend, Mikayla H. was diagnosed with cancer when she was 8. She is always positive, and I've never seen her sad. I met Mikayla when I was in 3rd grade. She came back from her first time having cancer. I didn't really know what cancer was at the time, but I knew you get sick. We met at my Hebrew school where we gave her a big basket to welcome her back. Even though I didn't know what cancer was I was happy it was over for her. However that was just the beginning.

When we were in Hebrew school, we were in different classes so it was hard to get to know her. I knew it must be hard for her family, but that just shows how strong they are. Mikayla lives with her mom, dad and two brothers Kaden and Jack.

When I was little I was really shy, so I didn't talk to her. When I got to 6th grade me and Mikayla were in the same class for the first time. Mikayla still had to go to the hospital to see if she was ok. While she was at the hospital she found out she still had cancer. Mikayla's family told our temple and people started helping. We decided that every month a different grade would make a basket and give it to Mikayla and her family. In January 2019 I found out that 7th and 8th grade would make a basket for February. We wanted the basket to be special because Mikayla was supposed to come back in February.

A few weeks before we found out we were doing the basket Mikayla had a big surgery. The surgery took two days because the hospital didn't want the doctors to be deprived of sleep. Everyone that knew about it was nervous. Was she going to be alright? I didn't really know about anything after that until about a week later. The surgery went well. I was so happy. The only bad thing was Mikayla had trouble walking.

As Mikayla is going through this, I was thinking that this could happen to anyone. Most people only think of it when it's happening to you or a family member or close friends. Most people don't think of it when an older person gets cancer. The big changing point is when a young kid gets cancer. You think you're doing fine, but then you don't feel well or you have a high fever. That's makes you think "What's wrong?", "Are they ok?" It doesn't occur to you that cancer could be causing this. I didn't realize

that it is so much harder for the person than you think. They must have so much on their mind.

Mikayla is so much fun to be around. She makes you happy when you are sad. I love being around her. Even though Mikayla had cancer, you can't tell. This is how cancer affected my life, Mikayla's family, herself, and her friends.