



2019 Ben Strauss Youth Program
Middle School
Teen Essay Contest

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How Cancer Hurts Me

Cancer not only hurts the people that have it, but the people around it. Seeing someone hurt and not being able to help is really hard. I have had pets, family, and friends all been affected by cancer. I am going to write about a close friend who died from cancer a few years ago.

The young man's name is Jason, he was very kind, and he meant a lot to me. He would always make me feel special. When I heard he had cancer I was sad. When I heard nothing was getting worse and I didn't understand that it wasn't getting better I was hopeful and excited. When I heard he his cancer spread and it wasn't gone and it wasn't going to get any better for him, I cried. I was extremely upset and did not fully understand what was going to happen. When he died I was devastated. Not only for me not being able to feel what only he made me feel, but for his family and his even closer friends. It hurt, I wanted to help, and I tried my best to. One of the worst parts was he died before Christmas. I was hoping and wishing he would get past Christmas, have one more holiday. However, that didn't happen when he died on November 27, 2017. As you can see this was only two years ago and he was born on December 13, 1970.

I remember when I would walk into the house and he would give me a high-five. My favorite part was when he called me "Boney". That's what him and his wife Alicia called me. That nickname meant so much to me, it told me in that house I was different. I was a kid. I could always

feel safe there. I have some memories of when he would bring me, my brother and his kids trick-or-treating on Halloween. We also went to family dinners and most of the time on fourth of July we went to the Skippack parade. Other kids had wonderful memories of him. This was because he had three kids. I feel awful for his kids, but they are getting through it the best they can and doing good. He also taught at Colonial Middle School and loved learning. The other thing that put him in great memory was his love of baseball. He was a coach for his oldest son and early on he was a coach for my brother. He was very encouraging and inspiring. His lucky and favorite number was 22. Today I'm proud to have a shirt with that number on it just for him.

Jason was an unlucky man who got brain cancer when he was young. He died when he was 47 even though he didn't deserve to. He was always very kind and one of his life mottos were "Win The Day!". Another was "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a great battle." Jason was also a storyteller and when he found out he had cancer he wrote lots and shared how he felt with others on Facebook. Some things that stood out to me were when he wrote "Do you have cancer, or does cancer have you?" and then he answered that question by writing "They have cancer, but it doesn't "have" them." Jason also made having cancer a story. In his mind, cancer was the villain and loved ones are the heroes. One of my favorite things about the story was when he stated, "While cancer may be a character in my story, it is not the story." I loved his attitude towards the situation. He didn't let cancer take over his life, he keeps living until the last day. He did as much as he could to keep going and he did a great job.

Overall, I love Jason. He was very light hearted and kind. I have tons of memories with him. In my opinion, he was amazing, and he handled what he got so well. My favorite thing about what he wrote when he got cancer was how he would keep living and he wouldn't let cancer control his life because like he said cancer didn't have him. "I still chose to fight everyday as I breath and love and create and coach and teach and parent. I see the brighter future." - Jason