



2020 Ben Strauss Youth Program
Middle School
Teen Essay Contest

1st Place Winner

Madison Stuetz

Mom

My mom is the bravest person I knew. She was so strong, so brave. My mom always had a smile on her face. For instance when she was in the hospital every time someone walked in she was happy. She wore a smile no matter how much pain she was in. You would never notice if she was in pain.

Everything began nine years ago when I was two years old. My mom was diagnosed with Breast cancer. I did not understand what was happening. I was just having the time of my life until...it happened. She had times when she had it and times she did not. One summer she had cancer. One summer cancer was gone. That summer was fun. Little did we know it was coming back worse.

When cancer came back, we had to make the time worth it. So, we went to Disney! We traveled all over the place on our way to Disney. We stopped at different places to see the sites. I was now seven. I had an idea of what was happening but still not very detailed. My dad told me not to worry. He promised to tell me when it was time to worry. We had to be careful of what she did and not pick too rough of rides. We got back and she was in a hospital for two weeks. It was getting more and more tough on Jackson and I. We would attend tons of Gilda's meetings. When she came out of the hospital we were back to doing what we could to make the best of the time.

After nine months of baseball games, traveling, and fun, the cancer got much worse. She went back into the hospital. We got ice cream and desserts from the nurses and doctors. Remember when I told you she smiled all the time. Well she really did not stop. She fought through with a smile until now. My dad had told us it was time to worry. We knew she could not win the fight cause the cancer got to her liver. Her eyes started to turn yellow. She did not stop smiling though. My brother and I said goodbye. We did not want to see her go so we stayed at our grandparents' house. My dad came over the next morning and told us she was gone. We did not know what to think. He had rocks in his hands and each had a word on them. My dad had said my mom held them before she died, so we had something from her. My rock said love. My brother's said live. My dad's said courage.

My mom taught me a lesson. I should be happy and smile no matter how tough or annoying things get. She smiled when things were tough so should I. My mom is my inspiration to how I live and what I do. This adventure was a wild ride and I am happy to share it with you.