2022 Ben Strauss Youth Program

Middle School

Teen Essay Contest

Seth Patel

The Story of My Life

I am fourteen years old, very athletic, and have a good personality. Most people would wonder how I am still okay. After almost ten years, I have not ended up being mom less and lost. I never really knew what cancer was until I was four years old. I thought my life was going very smoothly until one day my mom got a call. I did not think anything at the time because I was four and all I knew was to think about myself and make sure everybody does what I say. You see, I am the third child – in fact I am the third son and if you were to ask my two brothers or anyone else, I run the house. I am also known as “The Boss Baby” of our house or the “mouth” because what I say must happen. I know what you are thinking. Do not worry, I only am the “Boss” and “Mouth” of my house. I treat everyone else with the utmost respect because that is what my mom taught me. I often wonder if me being bossy was a way to deal with what was happening.

So back to how the story of my life started when I was four. I could not possibly think anything could be wrong when I heard the word cancer. I saw my mom and dad go silent and sad, but they probably were just fighting as moms and dads do sometimes. I could read faces though and I then noticed my mom’s and my dad’s face change. Their faces went from happy to almost about to cry at any time. I asked them what was wrong, and they said not to worry about it.

They took us to the Great Wolf Lodge, and I remember having a blast and even got blood shot eyes from all the chlorine in my eyes and salt. I also was introduced to the awesomeness known as Dip and Dots ice cream. So back to the story. When we got home my parents finally told all of us (my brothers are Cyrus who was eight and Tristan who was six at the time.) that my mom was sick. She had cancer, but at my age I did not know what cancer was or if it was bad or good. This is how my mom getting cancer made my life change.

Once I really knew what cancer was and that it was bad, it had really devastated me when I had to go visit my mom. It could have been the last time I would ever see her again, but luckily, she was strong and fought through it. After she got better, I felt blessed but than she did something that threw me off. She started signing us up for camps that would be with other kids my age who also have family members with cancer. At first, I was shy and kind of mad. I cried for two hours straight that I did not want to go to my first camp at five years old, but now it’s kind of something I look forward to. It is a time where people with similarities get to know one another I got to make more connections which is always nice. It is now part of my summers. My whole eating style also changed. My mom did not want me to follow in her footsteps and get sick. She would not feed us junk or what most people ate. Yes, it was annoying, but she was doing this to help us.

Even if I do not always agree with her, my mom being here, I now understand is a blessing. There are others I have heard at Camp Kesem that have lost their family members and how it has affected them. I try to appreciate everything I have.