A close-up of a sign

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**2024 Ben Straus High School Teen Essay Contest**

**Seth Patel**

**Cancer: The Impact on Me**

For the last 11 years I have always wondered what cancer was and how my mom getting it would affect me. I still remember the day my mom found out that she had cancer and how that day was the worst and surprisingly the best day of my life. It shattered me to pieces seeing my mom suffer during her time undergoing chemo but at the same time this experience taught me to value my loved ones. Before my mom had cancer, I used to be a literal monster. I was very stubborn, and my words were very hurtful if I did not get my way. But after seeing my mom the way she was it flipped a switch in my and now I can only appreciate my loved ones. Cancer affected my life to the core, and I could not be more grateful that my mom got through the support of my family and I of course.

Right after my mom got out of the hospital, it was the best day of my life. But her getting out of the hospital does not erase all the time she spent recovering. Once my mom got out, she looked weak physically and emotionally, and considering how young I was, I started to feel her emotions and worried if she was okay. I spent countless hours worrying about her even though she was already out of the hospital. I know not everyone makes it out of the hospital and seeing her was the turning point in my thought process and my goals. I wanted my mom to be happy when I grew up and to provide her with everything she could ever want. Till this day, my thought process has not changed. I still see her suffering from trying to make sure cancer never enters her body ever again. My mom does IV infusion every year to make sure her body is well and every time I see her do it aways brings me back to me watching her in the hospital while she was undergoing chemotherapy. There will always be this image and feeling whenever I see my mom in a hospital or undergoing so kind of treatment. Now, my mom just wanted the best for my two brothers and I and seeing her not being able to take care of me and my brothers made me devastated. It made me realize that some things in life happen for a reason and my mom always said to take care of the people you love. So now while she undergoes her treatments to make sure her body is healthy, I take care of her because that is what she taught me to do, and my support is what makes her strong.

Even though I supported my mom since day one and cancer should be a familiar term to be I cannot help but remember the day my mom got cancer. Every time cancer comes up, I can still remember I saw my mom and dad go silent and sad, but I thought they 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 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 form the pool. I also was introduced to the awesomeness known as Dip and Dots ice cream. But as I came home my fun ended and my parents finally told all of us (my brothers, Cyrus who was eight and Tristan who was six at the time) that my mom was sick and that this sickness if every harmful.

Even after knowing that my mom's life had fleshed before her eyes, I thought nothing of it. But during my 16th year on Earth this so-called cancer had finally caught up to me. I have been having a lot of stress this year as it is my first-year bac after two years of being homeschooled. Whenever I am stressed, I do not think right, and I tend to think about the past a lot. My stress was getting so bad that I had to get a therapist and that is where we figured out the truth. The truth is that whenever I get stressed, I tend to think about my mom and me seeing her in the hospital with no hair and cancer within her body. It still scares me till today. I am still blessed to have my mom by my side today and I will continue to appreciate her every day. Cancer had a significant impact on my life.