

Bayley Wolfe

GRBS Scholarship Essay

On December 23rd 2014, my mom died of colon cancer. Her life and death impacted our community and upon her funeral we began to learn just how much Heather Zank Wolfe changed people's lives. There was an outpouring of stories and love for her. She literally brought people out of the dark and gave them hope. She was loved by thousands and her name was spoken across prayer chains that reached all over the country and world. She was the kind of person they write books about.

While the cancer weakened my mother's body, her spirit was strengthened. If you met her in the grocery store, you would find pleasant conversation without complaints. She never complained, even in her last hours. She was the kindest patient you could ever find. When we couldn't control her pain, she told us she loved us. Despite her approaching fate, she continued to fight: trying every alternative cancer fighting method under the sun. She never gave up. When asked, she said even if she could, she would never choose to go back to life without cancer. She had grown so much that death was no longer a scary prognosis.

Heartbreaking was the best word to describe our state. I am facing a life without a mother. She won't be there to zip up my wedding dress or help me care for my future babies. I'll have to rely on calling my aunt or grandma when I need girl advice or simply the best technique to toilet cleaning. I've lost my best friend, and the person who knew me better than anyone in the world. She knew and loved me before anyone else in the world. While I'm showing my pigs and horses this coming season my biggest fan will be cheering me on from heaven. I can't hear her, but I can feel her.

Throughout the process and especially now, I find strength in the memories of her perseverance, and peace in her faith. She inspired me to study God's word with more depth, and begin to live life based on his word. She taught me to listen to the unheard, feed the hungry, and love the unappreciated. I am comforted knowing how full of a life she lived and that part of her still lives inside me.

Out of the many extremely important life lessons she taught me in the few 18 years we were together, I will always remember her saying, "showing other people love is the most important thing you could ever do". I truly believe that, and hope that my actions will spread that message. I had a wonderful mother who made the earth a little bit more bearable; and because of that, I will carry on her legacy by loving other people and leaving it better.

Not only am I struggling emotionally but financial issues play their own part in adding to the shadows. In addition to the huge cost of the alternative medicine, the debt accumulated from my mother's cancer treatments and an emergency colon removal surgery is tremendous. She did not have life insurance, and was a stay at home mom. Financial matters were pushed aside as her health declined; Being with her was more important, and I have no regrets on that account. Death in itself is very expensive for the loved ones you leave behind; I had no idea about the costs of funeral arrangements until her death. The high costs of college are looming over my family as we work to gain a handle on our new life. It will be tough, but I have high hopes that scholarships will help me to obtain a better grip.