

To Whom It May Concern:

My mother always said, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." Sadly she passed away from breast cancer in November of 1994 during my freshman year at Montgomery College. After a two-year battle her body and spirit gave out. My role consisted of taking her to, and keeping her company during chemotherapy treatments, administering her medications, and helping get her through the emotional ups and downs. I was always able to get her to smile. She was a beautiful woman with an amazing love for life.

Prior to my mom's diagnosis, our family had endured much more than any family should. My sister died at 6-weeks of age due to medical complications. My brother, at the age of eighteen was diagnosed with cancer. After two years of hospital stays he was able to return home and is now in remission. Such stress can tear a family apart. Physical and mental abuse became present within the home. My mother's diagnosis shook the family. The strong one was sick!! What was to happen??? That was just the question that no one could answer. Did they want to?? I stepped up. However, it was only a matter of time before I crashed. I ended up being diagnosed with anorexia and bulimia.

For many years, my father had dealt with many chronic illnesses including diabetes, heart disease, depression and bipolar disorder. My father's own frustration eventually manifested into mental abuse directed towards me. My disorder became increasingly more apparent. My therapist, physician and former teachers all advised me to move out in order to focus on recovering. After attempting suicide I had to seek help. I quit school and got a job so that I could afford treatment. In October of 1995, I was hired as a teacher's assistant at the Julia Brown Montessori School working with children ages 2 ½ to 8, where I am currently employed. I entered a private therapy treatment program with Suzanne Ricklin a LCSW in Columbia, MD.

My father died of lung cancer on Christmas morning 2001. Despite the issues my father and I had, I am happy to say that I was always there for him when he needed me. I am not sure that he ever understood why I left. For me, I had to become something other than the care-giving daughter. I know from other people that he was proud of who I became.

I have been left to pick up the pieces of a very dysfunctional life. I have managed to maintain a gpa of 3.29. I would like to finish what I have started with regards to my education. As a teacher I have a lot to offer. Getting to a stable place in my life was difficult at times. What doesn't kill you really does make you stronger. Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

Kerri L. McDaniel