

## **Michealle Hobler**

I cannot say that getting cancer was the best thing that ever happened to me but I can say that it has been an eye-opening experience that has positively changed my life. Four years ago, at the age of twenty, I was told that I had a twelve-pound mass growing inside my left ovary. By the time the doctors performed an exploratory laprectomy, the ovary had ruptured, spilling two liters of fluid into my abdominal cavity. Biopsies were done on the mass and all surrounding organs and tissue. The tests indicated that the mass was a malignant tumor but that the cancer had not spread. My doctors recommended three months of strong chemotherapy sessions as a precaution.

I was devastated by the news that I had received and believed that my death sentence had been issued way too early in life. It had been my experience that whenever someone was diagnosed with cancer, death would soon follow. There were still so many things that I wanted to do with my life before I left the earth. I wanted to finish college, get married, and have a family. I wanted to leave the earth knowing that I had touched others by making a difference in their lives. I promised myself that if I were to make it through the disease I would dedicate my life to helping others.

I began grieving but was not always tearful. My relationship with God became stronger each and every day. I felt a strong peace that I would make it through this illness. I leaned on my family and their continuous sense of humor to get me through chemotherapy sessions. My dad and I joked around quite a bit when I began losing my hair, as he was also balding from old age. Even though they were not the ones affected by the treatments, they were in emotional pain having to see my body deteriorate so rapidly.

Four years later, I look back on this frightening experience and am thankful, not only for having survived cancer but for having endured it. Cancer has forced me to mature faster, become more responsible, and realize my goal of becoming a veterinarian. I am now so passionate and aware of life and all that it has to offer. I live each day to absorb knowledge, while looking at all of my life experiences from a completely different perspective.

I do not believe that I should be considered for this scholarship simply because I am a cancer survivor. Anyone diagnosed with cancer could survive if it were God's will.

My survival is not based strictly on my strength and will but on the fact that there is more for me to accomplish here on this planet.

A lot has changed since my diagnoses. The first year of college (pre-cancer) I struggled with classes, finding them uninteresting. I preferred to ditch class and socialize instead of attending them. Now that I am older and more experienced, I have a newfound respect for higher learning. I now love school and the opportunity to expand my knowledge. I am continuing to work on my degree in Biology in hopes that one day I will become a veterinarian. I currently volunteer in the community and church whenever possible helping both man and animal. Each time I go out into the community to help others, I am thankful to have one more day added to the calendar, to be able to do so.

I feel that I have a talent that can only be ripened through my degree program and for this reason I believe I should be considered for the Matt Stauffer Memorial Scholarship. I hope to be an inspiration to other young people that are diagnosed with this horrible disease. I want to spread a message through my work that while cancer might halt life for a small amount of time, it doesn't necessarily mean one's time on earth has ended. It should create a new beginning and a fresh outlook.