

# Sophie Meinhardt Memorial Scholarship 2013

Charlotte Jansen

St. Jude

## **“Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.”**

Have I done something for someone else that was not required of me to help someone in need? I think so. In reality, I have done many things with no personal gain. But this one deed just stood out for me. I donated my hair to kids who have lost their own hair due to cancer. It's called Locks of Love.

I was 7 years old the first time I did this. My mom was the one who introduced me to this. I didn't really know what Locks of Love was. I didn't even know what cancer was? But every other day my mom would measure my hair until it was 10 inches! She brought me to a hair salon. I can still remember the day, a rainy spring evening. Not too cold. Not too hot. Perfect. We had to wait forever in the waiting room. Luckily, there were magazines that had different hair styles to look at. There were also some cookies which I helped myself to. Finally, to what seemed like a year, a woman called my name to get the haircut. She sat me in a chair and then washed my hair. It felt like a head massage! We walked back to the chair where the lady cuts your hair. She put it back in a tight pony-tail. That's when my mom came out with a camera to take pictures. My siblings were there also for support. The lady took a scissors and chopped my hair straight off. All of my long hair was gone in an instant. After that, she took 15 minutes to style what was left to my mom's likeness.

I feel I've inspired my family to do the same. My older sister donated her hair twice and so did my mom. I guess it's something our family does.

I never really knew how much having a head of hair would mean to someone until my mom was diagnosed with cancer. Unfortunately, the one that makes your hair fall out. It was called Lymphoma. All of her hair fell out, even her eyelashes. She hated it! I didn't know losing hair would be that personal, strange, and uncomfortable. Everyone would stop and stare at her bald head. I could tell she was uncomfortable and didn't want to leave our house very much.

Now I know how much having hair means to someone. Making a wig for them so not everyone will judge them is a special gift. After the first time I donated my hair, I did it again. After my hair grew out of course! This usually takes me about 3 years. I still do this now. And now I know how much I'm giving to someone. My mom's hair is still really short, and she still complains time to time. But she helped me understand how painful and humbling it is to have everyone look at you with no hair. My hair has grown pretty long again and pretty soon I'll be donating at least 10 more inches to someone facing the challenge of cancer.

I've attached one of the cards I've received from Locks of Love. I really don't need any thanks though. It just makes me feel happy that I've helped someone to feel good about their self and maybe give them some confidence to be seen as a person and not someone who is sick and bald. And it's as easy as not getting my hair cut and letting my hair grow. I think it would be really cool if I could see or meet one of the kids that I've helped out. That would be awesome!