

Sophie Meinhardt Memorial Scholarship 2013

Carly Selby

OLV

My whole life I have learned about God and talked about ways to be like him. I learned about volunteering, being kind, and helping people less fortunate than me. I often thought to myself how can I, a young girl, really help someone? I could give money, clothes and my time to helping someone. Who is that someone? I had these ideas in my mind about helping people. I thought it had to be some elaborate fundraiser. I was wrong. Recently, I had an experience that made me realize that I can help people and I can do it in my everyday life.

A few years ago this cute young family moved in next to us. Right away we became friends. We had a lot in common with them. Soon after moving in the dad found out he had cancer. It was bad but he was young and in good health so the doctors said he had a good chance of beating it. Well, after a surgery and some chemo he was cancer free. Our families continued to get even closer. They added a baby girl to their family. Things were good and everyone was thankful for the good news when he got his scans and they came back cancer free. I even remember going to a cancer free party to celebrate one year of no cancer.

About a year after that I remember being outside and hearing some of the moms say that my neighbor wasn't feeling good and that he had to have tests. He had the tests and it was bad, really bad. The cancer had spread to several places in his body. I thought to myself he is young and he beat this once before. He had a great attitude and started treatments right away. The next year was filled with lots of ups and downs but it was clear to see that he was quickly losing the battle to cancer. I could see a physical difference in him. He was losing weight and was weak. I asked my mom if he was going to be ok. She told me that we needed to pray for him and his family. We talked about what we could do for him and his family. We decided that the best thing to do was to help keep their lives, especially the kids', as normal as possible. That is what we did. I spent a lot of time just playing with the kids. Sometimes I could tell that the mom or dad just needed a break and I would say to them that I could watch them for awhile. There were times I was asked to hang out with my friends but I would pass so I could hang out with the kids. We spent a lot of time outside that summer. This was one of the best summers ever.

Things started to get bad and my neighbor had a hard time even getting out of bed. I was starting to feel scared. I had never really been around anyone that was this sick. I had a lot of questions and concerns. I often thought how does the wife do this? I asked my mom one day how the wife was. My mom said she was a strong person and she had put her trust in God. It was hard for me to understand this because her husband was dying. After 2 years of fighting he passed away. I was at Camp Joy with school when it happened. When I found out all I wanted to do was to give the kids a hug. My heart hurt for them. We spent the next few days with the family. They are so young to even really know what happened.

A week after the funeral we went to 10:30 mass. It was my family, our best friend family and the wife and her 2 kids. I looked around and saw all the love for them. The wife and her kids were surrounded by love. Someone in church leaned over and asked if we were all related. I guess other people could see the closeness as well. Yes we are a family. Maybe not blood related but a close group of people that love each other very much.

I think about them everyday. I learned a lot through this. I learned the importance of family and friends. I appreciate what I have. I also learned a lot from the wife. She put her trust in God that he will take care of her husband. I am sure this is one of the hardest things she will ever have to do. I feel I have a closer relationship with God because I prayed so much for him to take care of their family. I think about the idea of pay it forward. I have many good influences in my life and I hope I can do the same for other people. I can make good choices and help others in my everyday life and not even know it.