

Character Counts 2015 Writing Contest

When my father passed away in 2013, my family and I learned many hard lessons. We learned that life is too short, and that we must savor each and every day of our lives. My dad had cancer, and he underwent sixteen surgeries. With each surgery, we thought that he was getting better. His tumor moved to his leg and it grew. The doctors decided that to amputate his leg, was the way to go. My dad was now missing a whole leg, and we couldn't see how this was possible. They thought that they had removed every cancer cell, but it turned out that they didn't, and the cancer had spread to his lungs. The tumor grew and grew, and the doctors knew they wouldn't be able to help him. They told us that he was, in fact going to die. I thought to myself that this wasn't possible. My dad was a very strong man, yet he was being taken down by cancer. But there is always that one shred of hope inside you, and I was desperate to hold on to that. But then on October 1, he died. And when he passed away, I couldn't stop crying. And that is when it hit me, hope is overrated, and we should not live with hope, but rather love.

My family was very weak at this point, and we needed to stick together. That was when I learned that family is everything. That was when I realized the strength of the character counts pillar, caring. We needed to care more about each other and stick together. With my father gone, we had to take on more responsibilities that he had taken care of. Whenever there was a 'tech- problem', my sister and I would take care of it.

: Although his passing was, and still is, extremely difficult, we learned so much from it. His death brought us closer than we ever were. However, every day is still a struggle, but we take it one day at a time, and that is the best we can do.