

Guntaas K.

[00:00:00.719]

My family had recently moved to Canada

[00:00:02.818]

with just one bag of our things each.

[00:00:04.929]

My parents had yet to find jobs while we

[00:00:07.038]

were moving from basement to basement, struggling

[00:00:09.538]

to survive. I was 13 then.

[00:00:12.009]

When my mother was first diagnosed with a rare

[00:00:14.140]

form of breast cancer called triple negative

[00:00:16.170]

breast cancer.

[00:00:17.600]

Two years that followed, were slow

[00:00:19.620]

and treacherous. I accompanied her to all

[00:00:21.769]

her appointments.

[00:00:23.228]

Triple negative breast cancer is rare

[00:00:25.269]

and has no precise therapy, so she was given

[00:00:27.318]

the most aggressive of treatments.

[00:00:29.929]

Her physical and mental condition deteriorated

[00:00:32.399]

over time and I had to be by her side instead

[00:00:34.520]
of attending school.

[00:00:36.000]
I became her personal caretaker and missed

[00:00:38.069]
months on end of school.

[00:00:40.408]
The cancer returned after a year and spread

[00:00:42.689]
through her body.

[00:00:43.969]
The malignancy was unstoppable and

[00:00:45.978]
I was too young to lose my mother.

[00:00:48.399]
My dwindling plans of pursuing post-secondary

[00:00:50.770]
education were crushed when my mother

[00:00:52.880]
passed away since she did not have life

[00:00:54.969]
insurance. My family struggled with

[00:00:57.048]
grief and financial insecurity among

[00:00:59.368]
other things, we could not afford to

[00:01:01.459]
even have a funeral for my mother as the costs

[00:01:03.689]
were simply too high.

[00:01:05.620]
My father had to take on two full time jobs,

[00:01:07.939]
working tirelessly to provide for my brother

[00:01:10.278]
and I. The money that he was able to save

[00:01:12.650]
went towards my brother's education as he was

[00:01:14.698]
older.

[00:01:15.760]
As for me, I've been working part time

[00:01:17.918]
since I was old enough to work. I work two

[00:01:20.049]
jobs during university and all summer,

[00:01:22.180]
all while maintaining a perfect GPA and a

[00:01:24.198]
rigorous program and volunteering with

[00:01:26.338]
many organizations.

[00:01:27.849]
I've also won science fairs at the national level

[00:01:30.099]
for my research against all odds.

[00:01:32.540]
My post secondary education was threatened by

[00:01:34.558]
my mother's passing as it meant that I could not

[00:01:36.680]
attend the school that I wanted to since it was

[00:01:38.769]
too far and too expensive.

[00:01:41.540]

No life insurance took away the safety

[00:01:43.599]

net for my family and I. We had to pay

[00:01:45.719]

off my mother's loans and life insurance would

[00:01:47.790]

have greatly ameliorated that burden.

[00:01:50.239]

My personal encounter with the destruction that

[00:01:52.308]

cancer can cause to a family and experiencing

[00:01:54.689]

cancer, intensified trauma

[00:01:56.849]

and incessant emotional decay for

[00:01:58.980]

years of my life led me down

[00:02:01.040]

a very dark path. After my mother's

[00:02:03.540]

death, I was diagnosed with high functioning

[00:02:05.680]

anxiety and depression due to the financial

[00:02:07.849]

state of my family

[00:02:09.270]

and through coping with grief.

[00:02:11.649]

My dream job is to be a teacher and

[00:02:13.719]

to study gene therapy as a medical tool

[00:02:16.008]
for various diseases.

[00:02:17.750]
I believe that my undergraduate in health sciences

[00:02:20.229]
will allow me to pursue my dreams

[00:02:22.349]
if I can afford to do so.

[00:02:24.270]
Despite the constant anxiety of my future,

[00:02:26.659]
I was able to take on

[00:02:28.689]
some student loans and afford some of my education.

[00:02:31.300]
Yet I still struggle to cope with the

[00:02:33.360]
stress of paying for rent and other expenses.

[00:02:36.618]
This scholarship will allow me to take away

[00:02:38.629]
some of the financial burdens that I've been experiencing

[00:02:41.008]
throughout my life and worry a bit less

[00:02:43.210]
about

[00:02:44.210]
all of them and focus on my university

[00:02:46.338]
experience. Thank you.