



Fresh Voice

Andrew Caldwell

April 8, 2011. There was no lengthy, dramatic discussion. My mother came straight out with it.

“The neurologists found scars on my brain. I’ve been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, a chronic disease that damages the sheaths of nerve cells in my brain and spinal cord,” she said.

She spoke as if it were simple.

No cure.

Those were the first words that I read when I researched MS. Her health can’t be completely restored. Receiving this news from the bravest person I know was unprocessable.

Knowing how serious of a disease MS is and how much it will affect my mother’s health in the future has helped me learn how to value the memories that I have made and will continue to make with her.

My mother has MS but she’s still my mom. Late nights watching “The Middle” with her, washing dishes with “Let It Go” on full blast, going on walks with our dog while we talk about life: these memories teach me to not take a single second of her company for granted.

Her ability to love and receive love is something that a disease cannot take away.

The moments when my mother loses her balance, goes into a paralyzing shock, or has a sudden decline in cognitive function are when I am most afraid. Yet, through this adversity, I find that life is not guaranteed. I’ve come to cherish every moment that I share with my friends and family.

Although the risk of death has decreased in the last decade of research and medical attention, the hardships that my mother will face over the course of the rest of our lives will strengthen her character.

Her character—her ability to love and receive love—is something that a disease cannot take away.

The scars on my mother’s brain that affect her everyday cannot be healed. However, appreciating and loving everyday, the good and the bad, is what can heal the scars MS has put on my mother and my family.

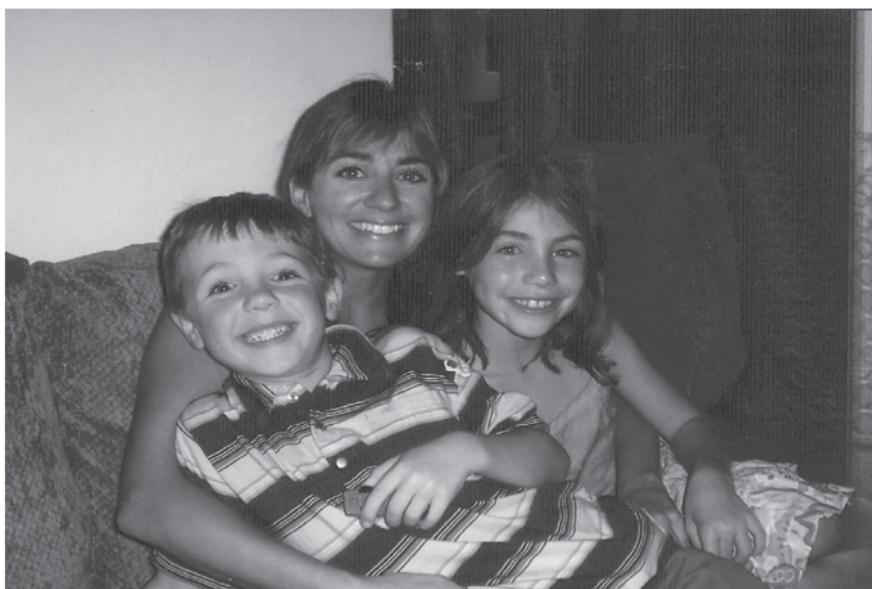


Photo courtesy of Andrew Caldwell

Below: LOVE HEALS ALL: Staff writer Andrew Caldwell sits with his mother, Susan, and older sister, Caroline, during a trip to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico in 2007.