

## **My Life after October 14, 1997**

The end of the day bell had rung an hour ago and my mom still had not arrived to pick Ronnie, Lauren, and me up from school. I knew something was seriously wrong. What could have happened? She was never late.

I was speculating that she had a flat tire, or that something had gone wrong with the car. But I was wrong. Finally we got picked up by a close friend of my mother's, Donna Nuesbaum. Ronnie, Lauren, and I went to spend the night at her house which was really odd because we never had sleepovers on a school night.

What could have happened, I was totally clueless. A few days later my Grandma and Grandpa from Minnesota came to our friend's house, I thought this was extremely strange because I had not been warned beforehand that they were coming into town. On the ride home my Grandparents told us what had happened, "Your mom had been shot and may not live." At that moment I felt that a piece of my heart had broken. Lauren said, "I bet it was R-O-N." I said later on that day, "I would give anything if some other family or I had been the one shot at the stop light."

My mom died that day on her way to lunch with my step dad. She was on Federal Highway in Boca Raton, Florida. A paramedic by the name of Steve Nelson brought her back to life, and I will always be thankful. My mom stayed at Delray Hospital for five and a half weeks. We could not see her there but we communicated with her by making tapes and drawing pictures for her.

Finally after four weeks I got to see my mom. You might think I was happy but I was extremely sad. See I was not saying hello to my mom but I was saying goodbye. My mother's doctors told us that most people never survive the surgery so I did not think I would see her again.

The doctors said my mom would not make it but they were wrong. The whole time my mom was in surgery all I could think about is what I said and how she could not answer me. "Mom please don't die, I would not be able to survive if you do. Please mom please," As I sat there, and she could not answer. "Mom don't die please." I did not say goodbye because I was optimistic but I truly knew that she had a higher chance of dieing than living.

After the surgery the doctors said, "Your mom made it." After I heard the results I felt like an ice cube melting off a ton of scared and horrid feelings. I knew everything was going to be all right.

We lived in Colorado for one year while my mom went to Craig Hospital for rehabilitation. We spent a lot of time visiting my mom in the hospital and I got to know a lot of other patients and nurses. My mom was not able to talk in the beginning and she had to learn how to breathe on her own. After she completed her rehabilitation we moved to California. This is when my mom started getting a lot better.

Finally we moved to Arizona and now people from all over America check out her web site, email, or call her. My mom is a mentor for the Arizona Spinal Cord Association. She visits with newly injured patients and tells them there is life after a wheel chair. She also is an active advocate against domestic violence. It is cool to have my mom be an influence in their lives.