

Sydney, Gollihare
12
Village High School
Colorado

What Drives You?

Dear Cancer,

Hello, you know me as Sydney Gollihare, but you should also remember me as the granddaughter of Sue Gollihare, who laid in a hospital bed in 2018 fighting off the malignant poison that filled her lungs and brain. My name shall not be one you forget, as I am coming for you. You will no longer destroy with your shadowy fear, because I will no longer wait for those in pain to be saved. It is my turn, by becoming a Pediatric Oncologist, to ensure joy grows more than any tumor, in the pursuit of innovative treatments. I may not be the only one with this ambitious goal in mind, however, I am the one who will battle to ensure no child suffers from their cancerous diagnosis.

If you forgot, I spent over eighty-five hours last spring raising \$3,550 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Trust me, it was no simple feat to go door to door asking for donations, hosting a social media takeover, or choreographing a contemporary dance at my ballet studio to bring about awareness for this phenomenal cause. Although, every moment was worth it to give a child victory against you. In this program I tied my passion and purpose to my ever-enduring trait of grit, which you can witness amidst my high-performing achievements in the classroom or out in the community. In light of my service for St. Jude's, I have chosen to

advance the future of medicine, by attending Creighton University with goals to care for kids of every religion, race, and creed.

Let me remind you that I spend my Friday mornings supporting the patients in the Oncology Department of UCHealth's North hospital. It is not because I have to, but because I want to see this incredible field where compassion defines every action and you hear the sound of bells whenever an illness is cured. Here, I have the honor of delivering warm blankets to chemotherapy patients, refilling medical carts, and buying coffee for a woman who cries, while she watches her husband become a shell of who he once was. In this hallway streaked with sunlight, I do not see your cold fingers clinging to infusion pumps, just draining slowly away. I smile now knowing your power is fading and gone.

So, Cancer, any last words? That's okay if not, I would prefer that you left without afflicting another human being. You may radiate terror, however there is nowhere for you to hide, as darkness has betrayed you for a much brighter dawn. My grandmother hooked to mechanized oxygen whispered to me before her passing, "If you cannot see the light, be one." Her advice echoed in my ears at her funeral, and continued to sound in my heart years after. Her fiery spirit lives on to mock you and I look forward to furthering her legacy. Goodbye for now and ever.

Sincerely,

Sydney