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## Admission Essay

When you're a teen, you feel invulnerable; you feel that nothing in the world can stop you, and that your life in front of you will be so incredibly easy. You never think that something will happen to you, or that you might have to put your plans on hold; you might as well be immortal. On August 9, 2012, however, that feeling of invulnerability was taken away from me, when I found out that my back pain was, in actuality, a large mass, 6 centimeters in size, on my ovary which needed to be removed.
Surgery, up to that point, was likely my biggest lifelong fear, to the extent where I did not believe I could get my wisdom teeth out without suffering a panic attack. However, when faced with this mass that needed to be removed, and seeing the fear in my parents' eyes, I knew I had to face that fear in order to save myself. I went into what was supposed to be a 45-minute session of laparoscopic surgery. The surgery ended up taking seven whole hours, in which the spreading mass was removed, along with one of my ovaries and a section of my colon. This also left me with an ileostomy, which I had reversed a few months later.
When I woke up from that first surgery and heard the outcome, I was surprised at how calm I was. While I did complain and get frustrated quite a bit, I soon learned to take my situation in stride, gaining a positive perspective. Everyone from my friends to my surgeons (and even I) was surprised at how much strength I managed to find in myself. Even when I discovered that I had ovarian cancer, I attempted to assuage everyone's fears and make them feel comfortable with my illness.
At this point, I have started treatments and chemotherapy; I have only increased in strength and positivity. Even though I ended up losing all of my hair, I wear my wig with confidence, and I manage to make do even with the limited energy I have after treatments. This has affected my schoolwork as well; I was forced to drop out of the IB Diploma. Despite these obstacles, I learn as much as I can when I am not in treatment.
In order to be honest and transparent about my situation, I let everyone in my school know about my condition. When they comment on how strong I am, I don't quite believe them - this strength does not come from me specifically, but is something I believe everyone discovers within themselves when they are put in this situation. Through these kinds of difficulties, I firmly believe that everyone finds the strength they need to endure. It helps immensely to have strong family and friendships to help you along the way. These things have helped me weather the storm of illness with grace and dignity.