

Flesh and blood

Business



Family, what does that word mean? Fam•i•ly, a group of people related to each other by blood or marriage. At least that's what the dictionary says. But family is way more than blood or a piece of paper.

My family is all I have in my life. They are my rock, my shoulders to cry on, they believe in me, and most importantly, they love me. Families are like running a race in track. Every family has hurdles to jump over, but in the end it is worth it. My family in particular has had many hurdles to jump over.

One of them being cancer. In 2004 my dad was diagnosed with stage four lymphoma cancer. We were living in Houston, Texas at that time, and all our family members lived out of state, the closest being in Tennessee. It was very hard for my family. I thought we were gonna be all alone during the time of treatments, but I was wrong. My girl scout troop leader helped my mom take care of my little sister Emily and me.

Our neighbor would do all our yard work and take out the trash. Our neighbors across the street helped out so much by babysitting my sister and I, cooking dinners for us, and cleaning the house for my mom. That was when the neighborhood became part of our family. My dad was cancer free in the summer of 2005 when the complete unthinkable happened. My mom was diagnosed with stage one ovarian cancer in the fall of 2005. My mom is my best friend so I was really devastated, but the community, my girl scout troop and even family flew in from all over the U.

S to help my dad, sister and me with my mom. Every other night either people in my girl scout troop, my parent`s co workers, or neighbors made us dinner. My sister`s and my friend`s parents also helped out tons. They would

take us places to get our minds off my mom and they would babysit us when my mom had chemo treatments. Almost a year later she was pronounced cancer free. It was such a relief.

Another hurdle my family has had, is that my grandpa on my mom`s side has Alzheimer`s and my grandma is almost completely blind. So my mom, dad, sister and I packed up and moved all the way up to Old Orchard Beach Maine to take care of them. Almost all of my mom`s side of the family lives in Maine which was a plus. Four out of the five sisters my mom has lives in Maine so one day a week one sister takes care of my grandparents. We live with them so we help 24/7. To my dad`s side of the family, family also means tradition.

Why? Because my dad`s side of the family is Native American. When my dad was three years old, he was taken out of his Native American home and placed in the “ white man” foster care system. When he was adopted, his adoptive family changed his middle name so that he could not be found by his real family. Forty eight years after he was taken out of his real home, my dad found his family again. It has been almost five years now since he found his family.

We are learning a lot about family and traditions and why they matter so much. It mattered so much to my dad that I lived with one of my Native American grandmothers for the whole summer last year to learn all about the culture. I learned how to make clothing, foods, and art. But most importantly, I learned about my ancestors in my family and all the legends of the tribe. Family is very very important to Native Americans because without

family they would not be able to pass down their heritage, traditions, and most importantly culture.

Families stick together through thick and thin. They make dreams and wishes come true. Family is not a word. It is a feeling, a person, and your real life conscience. I know my family will tell me when I`m doing something bad or wrong. They tell me good choices to make and they help me recognized bad choices that could and most likely will hurt me in the long run.

Family is more than just flesh and blood. They are your best friends that will never leave. They are your shoulder to cry on that will never move. They are your rock to lean on that will never break. They believe and support you, but most importantly they love you no matter what!