

What I am thankful for: Beating cancer

By **Majorie Lichner**,
Head Copy Editor

I had cancer. Stage four Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma to be specific.

I feel like the best way to start this article is to tell you that I'm fine. I'm not going to die (yet), and I have a unique story to tell when I'm older.

It all started when I was in middle school. I was in eighth grade, and I was one quarter away from graduating. My classes were in place, and I was more than ready to take on high school.

I had it all planned out. I was going to play volleyball and get straight A's in all my classes. That is clearly not what happened.

With only a quarter left in my middle school career, it's safe to say that I was pretty much over school at that point. I was sleeping in way more than I should have, and I was missing days for having a sore throat or just because I didn't feel like myself.

I only noticed the severity of it when my knee started throbbing for no reason. At first I thought it was because of volleyball: then I thought it was because I was growing.

Long story short, I went to the doctor, and they connected the dots. I was way sicker than I thought.

I got diagnosed at the end of April. Less than three days later, I was sent to Rush University Hospi-

tal in Chicago.

I missed almost the rest of the school year. By the time my middle school graduation hit, I had just lost all my hair to chemotherapy. Against my own will, I attended middle school promotion.

Everyone praises the summer of 2016 for being the best summer ever, I can't relate. Every Monday, Thursday and Saturday, my mom and I woke up at 7 a.m. to go to Rush Hospital. We would go, they would take my blood, and they would send me on my way home.

I think the worst part about being sick was when August hit. I now had to juggle freshman year, chemotherapy and inevitably, the long course of remission. If any of you seniors saw a bald girl wandering around school, I can guarantee that was me.

I missed a ton of school freshman year, which totally tanked my GPA. I was insecure, exhausted and totally over getting stared at in the hallways. There was no way I was ever playing volleyball again, and I had late assignments piling up.

On the bright side, in late September, I went into remission. Over 75 hospital visits, one emergency room visit, one surgery and six and a half rounds of chemotherapy later, I was cancer free.

Being in remission isn't as great as it sounds. Remission itself lasts five years, to make sure the cancer doesn't come back, and I'm only on year three. Chemotherapy destroyed



Lichner enjoys her Make-A-Wish family trip to London over the summer.

Photo by **Majorie Lichner**



Lichner celebrates the halfway mark of her cancer diagnosis with her dad.

Photo by **Majorie Lichner**

my immune system, made me lose my hair -- and with that my confidence.

I still miss school regularly because of my cancer. I have to get scans every six months to ensure I am still healthy, and I get sick more because of my awful immune system. I also regularly visit my doctors at Rush Hospital, as every tiny health issue could actually be a big one.

A lot has changed since freshman year for me. My hair has grown back, I've made some amazing friends and I have regained the confidence that cancer took from me.

I also got my own Make-

A-Wish. Summer into my junior year, my family and I went to Wales and London and visit one of the best cities in the world.

With Thanksgiving coming up, I'm very grateful for everything I have. I'm especially grateful that I'm healthy and able to spend time with the people I care about. I don't have to spend the holidays in the hospital, which is what all cancer patients dread.

Cancer is the worst thing that has ever happened to me, but it's in the past. No one should ever go through what I went through. Hopefully one day, no one will have to.

Man on the street: Mustangs give thanks this season

Compiled by **Jacob Casella**
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"I'm thankful for Mint Chocolate Clif Bars," -- Kelsey Casella (10).



"I'm thankful for music. I love music. Music is great," -- Ryan Koudelik (11).



"We're thankful for education [and] freedom of speech..." -- Mrs. Marinakos's fourth period Global class



"I'm thankful for apple jelly and peanut butter Uncrustables," --Mathias Jaikovski (right) (9).



"I'm thankful for food ... good family, good friends and a good education," -- Reese Rhoads (12).

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