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Junior-Year Change

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Patrick-Gregori Sarmiento

Junior-Year Change

Living in Los Angeles means that I am rarely directly exposed to natural disasters, but this does not mean I have not been exposed to an event that has altered my life permanently. The chain of events I went through during high school are the reason I am the person I am today. If it weren’t for these events, I would not have made it this far. I wouldn’t have been motivated to go to college and would probably have joined the military.

During my junior year of high school, my mom was going through chemotherapy, and I was forced into a position of working and attending school. These different roles created immense amounts of stress for me. Not only did I have to attend school and try to maintain my grades, but I also had to take care of my mom at home and work a part time job. This stress began to add up and show in all aspects of my life, as my grades began to plummet and my mental health began to decline. By the time my mom had finished her treatments, it was too late for me, and my physical state had taken a heavy toll.

Due to the stress I endured throughout my mom’s treatment, my immune system had weakened and I started to get sick. However, because I was stubborn I refused to go to the doctor and continued to go to school, eventually catching pneumonia. During this time I was stuck at home contemplating school and how I was going to catch up, which kept me from resting. After a few days I finally went to the doctor, and they prescribed me tablets of anabolic steroids. What I was unaware of was the fact that the doctor had made a mistake with my prescription.

The prescription my doctor had given me was for a dangerously high potency and led to an overdose which put me in the hospital. Even though I was released the next morning, the effects had left me unstable, as I was unable to rest for several days due to the medication...
Keeping me awake prior to going to the hospital. After leaving the hospital, I felt extremely depressed, as I began to mentally destabilize, and was eventually mandated to go to therapy and counseling daily.

Depression being such a complex problem caused me to damage all of the relationships with those around me. After months of the counseling and therapy, I finally was able to accept my problems and fight back my depression. This counseling taught me how to cope with stress better, and helped me bring my grades back up. However, the damage that was done led to me having social anxiety.

By the time I finished out my junior year of high school, I had changed completely. I had become an individual who was willing to stand up for others because I had an understanding of what it felt like to be alone because of the depression. I knew that I did not want others to feel how I had and I knew that by becoming educated I could help others more. These events caused me to become who I am now, and they remind me to work hard and to have faith in myself and to help others. This is the reason for my tattoo on my shoulder, to symbolize to have faith and to serve and protect others.