

I always believed that things happen for a reason and that nothing is a coincidence. How else can you explain how this foundation came to be.

In January of 1984, my family received a call that my mom had had a seizure at work. A few days after that we were informed that she had brain cancer. It only took ten months for this disease to take her life. During those ten months, my family and I watched helplessly as our beautiful, funny, adventurous, smart, and loving mother was turned into just a shell of the person she was before inflicted with this disease. A month before she passed she became what we called catatonic. As long as I live I will never forget the stare – she could be looking right at you but she would be seeing right through you – that stare will haunt me forever.

As most of us know, life goes on after the death of loved one, whether we want it to or not. In my case, the happiest days of my life were also the saddest. Without my mother, I got married and had two more children – one that was named in memory of my mom, Samantha Nannette.

In 2003 my Samantha came home from school asking if her friend Jackie could come over to hang out. Within the next hour Jackie and her mom were knocking at my door. I introduced myself and she held out her hand to shake mine and said, “hi I’m Nan”. I was very surprised because Nan is not a name you hear very often. I told her that that was my mother’s name. I guess the “was” threw her and I explained that my mom had passed away quite a while ago. She very quietly asked what had happened. I explained about the brain cancer that took her. Nan had a strange look on her face and then began telling me how she was in remission from brain cancer. In that moment every hair on the back of my neck stood at attention.

I knew back then that there was a reason I was meeting this family, I just didn’t know what it was yet. Jackie’s mom passed on Easter of 2005, and that’s when I figured it out. All of the years that I spent being so bitter about losing my mom and all the Mother’s Days that I didn’t want to spend with my kids because I missed my mom so much – I did

not want that for Jackie. If I could find something that Jackie could put that emotion into maybe it would help her not to lose all the years I did being so angry. So I came up with the idea of helping other families who had gone through or who were going through what Jackie and I did. Imagine what we could accomplish just from the inspiration gotten from remembering those two beautiful smiles, the light that shone from those eyes, and the endless energy that both had when it came to taking care of their families. This has become not only something that I want to do but something that I need to do. I want my Mom's death to mean something and I'm sure Jackie feels the same. If we can ease other people's suffering even just a little, in our mothers' names, maybe it will start to ease a little of our own pain.