

Bill Gates Grants Shari's Wish



Dear Making Memories Breast Cancer Foundation,

I am 49 and the mother of 2 boys ages 15 and 10. I was originally diagnosed with breast cancer in 1993 when my children were 6 and 2. We have all lived under the specter of this disease now for 8 years. I now have stage IV breast cancer with metastases to the liver, lung and bone. I have lost a lot in my life these last couple of years, my health, and dreams for the future, my career and the lovely sense of well-being and blissful ignorance that healthy people have in their day to day life. I know and understand how very precarious my situation is.

I feel like I am racing the clock to get my kids "squared away" before I have to leave them. I have written all of their birthday and graduation cards for years to come. I have made a tape for each of them and made photo albums of each of their childhoods with anecdotes form me.

However, my kids still live with the day-to-day anxiety of my illness. They have to watch the decline in my health and always wonder what will happen next and how much longer I will be here. As a result my older son has become depressed and sad and cannot see that he has a promising life regardless of what will happen to me. He has lost self-confidence and self-esteem. It seems that when I lost my dreams, he lost his dreams too. The pain of seeing him suffer my decline is worse than anything I have ever experienced including my own illness. You cannot imagine what it is like to see your child suffer and feel so very helpless..

My request would be for my son to meet Bill Gates. Here is a man who struggled with his own vision of what computers should be. In the process of becoming very successful, he dropped out of college and didn't listen to the naysayers around him. His determination and drive, as well as his originality of thought in problem solving made him the most successful person in the history of computers. My son has struggled this year in school both because of his attention deficit problems, his loss of self-esteem and his sadness at my illness. It is as if a part of him is dying with me and he has given up hope.

If he could somehow meet Mr. Gates, his idol, I think it might rekindle his dreams and his hopes. It could show him that here too was someone with original vision and determination who achieved success despite the fact that it was not through the traditional education route. It could be a turning point in his young life and would mean the world to me. I can't tell you what a blessing it would be. If we could arrange this, I really believe it could help my son tremendously and therefore allow me peace in my transition to palliative care.

Thank you for the invaluable and merciful work that you do. You change the lives of many women and their families dealing with the tragedy of dying young and leaving behind grieving children.

God Bless You

Shari Kahane

