

# Don't Forget to Say I Love You

By Nicole Fortuna, age ten

Two summers ago my family took a vacation, but we stayed in town. We went to downtown Chicago to see museums and to the Navy Pier. I saved all the ticket stubs and pictures from our vacation. I didn't know then how important they would become to me.

A few weeks later, my family had just come home from a party. My dad wasn't feeling good at all. A little while later my mom decided to take my dad to the hospital.

He came home about two days later. It seemed like nothing was wrong, but I overheard a phone call and realized my dad had cancer.

A few weeks later, my dad went back to the hospital to have surgery on his lung where they had found the cancer.

That week, I spent almost every night at a friend's house because my mom spent almost all her time with my dad. When I finally got to go see my dad, we spent all day just being silent and watching TV together. I was uncomfortable with this, and my dad could tell. I was Daddy's princess and he always told me he'd be there for me forever. That's what he said.

Toward the close of the day, we had to leave because he was starting to feel weak. I forgot to say I love you when I left.

Some days later, I spent the night at my friend Melanie's house because we had camp the next day. We laughed and giggled until ten o'clock.

My mom came over the next day to see me. She seemed really sad. She told me my dad wasn't doing so well.

Although I was worried, I left to go swimming at camp. As soon as we pulled out of the driveway, I looked back at my mom and saw that she had started to cry.

When I got home she kept asking me if I wanted a snack before she talked to me. Then, she told me that my dad had died. The two of us cried together for hours. Suddenly nothing felt the same.

My dad said that he would always be there for me.

Suddenly I realized something very important. He would always be there for me, but not in the way that I had thought. He would be watching over me from heaven.

Now when I'm lonely for my dad, I take out those ticket stubs and pictures, and pretty soon I feel happy.

And I'll always remember what he told me: Never go to bed mad at someone, because you never know what can happen and when you will get to see that person again. Always tell the people you care about that you love them, when you have the chance.