

My Turn

By Dennis Franks

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Faith Potter wasn't looking for accolades or rewards in 2007 when she dedicated much of her free time and energy helping her grandmother, Deborah Yothers, who was battling breast cancer. To Faith, who was 12 at the time, it was just something that she knew she had to do for her "Grammy."



Stephanie's Champions - PRCTC student Faith Potter (fourth from left on bottom row) and other 2011 Champion Award recipients.

"I have always been very close to my grandmother," said Faith. "She means so much to me."

She may not have been looking for them, but accolades and rewards have been showered on Faith, who is a junior from Circleville in our Criminal Investigation & Police Science program.

First, her grandmother – whose cancer is in remission – wrote an essay and submitted it to the Stefanie Spielman Fund for Breast Cancer Research at Ohio State's James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute. In it, Deborah described Faith's selfless dedication helping her during a difficult period of her life. Faith called her grandmother every day, visited her at her Lewis Center home on weekends or days she did not have school, and was there with other adult members of the family when Deborah had her surgery. Faith

even helped pick out a wig for her grandmother, after she lost her hair due to cancer treatments. Consider the following passages from Deborah's essay:

"I have never seen a child so dedicated in helping me get through my cancer," Deborah wrote. "She kept me strong and positive, and helped me want to keep going when I thought there was no hope for me. When other children were out playing, she was there being my support.

"She made me breakfast and lunch even when I was too sick from my chemo treatments to eat," she continued. "She would say, 'Grammy, just try to eat so you won't get weak.' When my hair fell out and I felt I looked so ugly being bald, she said I was pretty."

Last April, Faith was named one of five people in Ohio to receive the Champion Award. The Champion Award was established by Stefanie Spielman and her husband, Chris Spielman, to honor an important factor in cancer treatment, the loving and healing presence of a devoted caregiver.

Also last year, Faith, along with her mother, walked the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in Columbus, and continues to volunteer at the Race for the Cure table at Macy's.

Receiving the Champions Award was an incredible honor, but her grandfather, Edward "Skip" Potter, thought his granddaughter deserved some additional recognition. So, he recently surprised her with tickets for the 5th Annual Buckeye Cruise for Cancer on Feb. 23-27. Faith, along with hundreds of other Buckeye friends, will travel from Key West to Nassau, Bahamas. On the cruise, she will rub elbows with dozens of former Buckeye athletes and coaches, including Chris Spielman, Archie Griffin, Kirk Herbstreit, Craig Krenzel, and others.

Faith's story shows us how special and selfless many of our students are, and serves as a reminder to the real-life issues many face on a daily basis. She definitely lives up to the meaning of her first name. Congratulations, Faith, and enjoy the cruise because you earned it.

