

I was 13 years old when my baby brother was born. Charles Lee came into the world as beautiful and perfect as we ever could have imagined him being. Whenever life seems to be going so perfect, we almost get into a rhythm of happiness and feel like nothing can ever bring us down. Just 13 short months later the perfect world I was living in crashed down around me. We had known that something was not quite right with Charles from the time he was about eight months old and still not sitting up like he should have been. However, we thought that he was either extremely lazy or maybe Autistic. Never could I have imagined that Charles would be diagnosed with a fatal, untreatable illness, one that would only allow him to be a part of my life for a short time. In the short time I spent with Charles, I was taught more life lessons than one would typically learn in an entire lifetime. Tay-Sachs disease stole so much from Charles and our family but without it, never would I have had the opportunity to meet so many of the wonderful people and families that I have. Never would I have had the chance to truly hold an Angel.

I am currently in my first semester of nursing school. Every day, I am reminded of the things Charles taught me. I am reassured that my choice to go to nursing school was the right choice. And I know that pediatrics is truly where my heart is. Charles taught me more compassion and patience than anyone else ever could have. Each week when I am doing my clinical hours and find myself becoming frustrated or impatient with a client I remind myself of the time when Charles was unable to do anything for himself. I know that there are times when I truly take my abilities for granted. The ability I have to feed myself, take care of my daily hygiene

needs, and the ability to think and make my own decisions. Working with those who are not as fortunate as I is a daily reminder of my sweet baby brother.

Everything I do, I do in honor of Charles Lee. When I am taking care of patient, I treat him or her as if they are a part of my own family. Charles has given me the ability to look past so many things and to remember to treat others as I would want to be treated, or in this case, as I would want my family members to be treated. There are days when this is easier said than done, but when I glance down at my wrist and see Charles' bracelet that I have worn everyday for the past five and half years, it is an instant reminder. Everyone deserves the chance to live the best life that they can during the time they are allotted here on Earth.

Charles became a big brother in January of 2011. Each time I look at little Blakey, I see a spitting image of his big brother. I know that Charles would be so proud of his baby brother. I appreciate and enjoy my time with Blake so much more after being taught that you never know when that time will come to an end. Seeing Blake run, play, and talk like we imagine every little boy should, sometimes makes me sad, but I absolutely love knowing that he has a true guardian angel watching down over him all day as he plays and all night as he sleeps.

My life could have turned out so differently. If Charles had not been sick, who knows if I would have ended up pursuing a career in the medical field. I probably wouldn't have another beautiful baby brother running around causing trouble. I would have my sweet little Charles, but I definitely would not have the knowledge and compassion that I learned because of Charles Lee.