

What is a mother's job? What do mothers do? Mothers are all alike in their drive to protect, nurture and guide their children, but the way they do this is what makes them *our* mothers. My mother has been an unwavering source of support for me my whole life. She has been teaching and sacrificing for my sister and me since the first time she held us. From endless hours of lessons in the cold, to weekends in the sweltering heat at horse shows she has been dedicated to supporting our passion for this sport. Having two horse crazy daughters has had its challenges. Whether that means finding a horse that will fulfill both our needs, or juggling three different schedules, our mom has never hesitated to make a sacrifice of her time, patience or sanity (because getting up at 5 am, 5 days in a row is pretty insane). She has done whatever it takes to help us succeed. She also recognizes that to succeed, sometimes you need to fall. In this aspect our mom has used riding as a platform to teach us valuable life lessons. That if you really want to get somewhere, whether that's the USEF West Coast Finals or your first choice college you can get there if you want it bad enough. She has taught lessons from patience, when traffic is stopped and we're late for our lesson, to how to learn from the hard mistakes and embrace the lessons they can teach you.

Nothing has stopped our mother's constant devotion to our dreams and love for this sport. Even the recent diagnosis that her cancer has come out of remission didn't slow her down. Like everything in her life she has handled it with inspiring strength and grace, and this has been no exception. Even through her frightening coughs, and rounds of chemo she has continued to put us first. However this shouldn't surprise me my mom has always put others before herself.

My mother has always awed me with her wisdom, strength and independence. Over the years there have been countless situations when she has proven how remarkable she is. One day sticks out in my mind. The day my sister Rory, was kicked in the face, breaking her nose and jaw. Most of what I remember from my 14-year-old perspective was blood, and just hope she wasn't going to die. While that memory is a bit melodramatic my mother's attitude was anything but. Throughout the traumatic ER experience and hospitalization my mom was completely calm and reassuring. Through surgery and the awful, dreaded nose drops she was there holding her hand, telling her to be strong, and why stretching her jaw and those stupid nose drops really were necessary.

As I have gotten older and can look back at all the things she has done and see why she has insisted on them my admiration for her just grows. My mom has been so much more than just my mom. She was there telling me "no" when I didn't want to hear it, when of course she was always right. She has shown me true generosity through her unending kindness. Her constant genuine concern for others and ability to make them feel special makes me want to give back and change peoples lives. She has always emphasized the importance of standing tall, being independent and responsible for your actions. She has done all her teaching by example never expecting us to do something she wouldn't do. In this past year I have had so many special moments with this amazing woman, who is so much more than a mother. My mom is my teacher, my caregiver, my supporter, my example, my friend, my hero. This is why I am nominating my mom, Heather Orr, for 2010 Mother of the Year.

Love, Risa and Rory Reichelt