

# *Shane Holmes*

By Brandi and DeeJae Holmes

**O**ur mother Shane Holmes, continues to inspire us everyday with her miraculous fight for her life and the ongoing challenges she has overcome.

In November, Shane was diagnosed with breast cancer, while also continuing to fight for a 20 year marriage that caused a great deal of stress and pain in her life. Our mother stayed strong and left her husband of 20 years while in the middle of trying to have surgery to remove a tumor. Shane, DeeJae, and I were forced to leave our home at the hands of our father. With the thought of not having a home, Shane stayed strong and hunted for a nice, safe home that could be a fresh start. With no financial help from her husband, our mom has provided us with a great positive place to live.

Easy is not the word to describe the past months. Our mom has influenced us by taking a stand against a husband who caused a great deal of harm. As young women, her example will guide us when choosing to date, and marriage. Shane has said that she is under a dark cloud and she "can never catch a break." But what she doesn't realize is that she is the sunshine in our lives everyday. Along with battling a divorce, having breast cancer has not caused her to grow weak. Shane has chosen to seek an alternative way of healing that has taken a lot of courage to follow. Our courageous mother said no to chemotherapy and radiation and embarks on a journey to a natural way of healing. She follows a strict diet and exercise routine and visits a homeopathic doctor. We have to say that our mother is in great health and she is "HOT!" She has never looked better!

We are so inspired by the courage she has to fight breast cancer, with a strategy that to some people, may be controversial. Shane Holmes is a mother, a role model, and a great friend that has inspired not only her girls, but everyone she comes into contact with.

# *Mrs. Turk*

By Bethany Rheanne Turk

(an excerpt)

**S**ince my mummy was a little girl, she has suffered from the life-threatening illness known as Lupus, a disease that ravages the body's inner organs. It can affect everything from mood and temperament, to the nervous system, to the soft tissue and eyesight, and, although in no way contagious, causes such unpleasant side effects as sensitivity to sunlight, and arthritis. Because of this degenerate disease, it seems as though my mum has spent more time in the hospital than the doctors who work there, and she is on a first-name basis with a majority of the nurses. Her failing health has forced her to endure many setbacks in life, but none so much as this year. Since this time last spring, my mother has lost her best friend, her dear sister, and her cherished mother, suffered through my daddy's hip-replacement surgery and also been rear-ended in a horrible car crash, leaving her permanently handicapped and unable to continue on with her teaching at Kendrick Elementary School as a reading specialist. The worst blow for her though, by far, is the fact that she was too ill to attend either her sister or mother's funeral. And yet somehow, through all the doom and gloom surrounding my family, my mummy has managed to be a light to everyone around her, a constant system of support to me and my father, a shoulder to cry on, and a patient ear to listen, even to my silly college freshman woes. When her health permits, she insists on being in the thick of things: baking biscuits for the neighbors, ushering me to and from acting classes, and cooking meals for the less fortunate. On days when her back hurts too much for her to walk, she cheers from the sidelines, and continues to be the hub of my family's wheel of life, organizing things through emails and phone calls. Her confidence and gentle nature, her vibrant and uplifting personality, and her calm radiance and sound beliefs, even in the face of immeasurable adversity, make my mother my role model, my inspiration, and most of all: my best friend. I love her dearly. In my book, she truly is the world's best mum.

# Annie Phelps

By Brandi Pride

(an excerpt)

What makes a mother special? I don't think *any* of us truly know the answer to that question until we are mothers ourselves, or are about to be. I have known my mother was always a woman worthy of admiration. A single mother for 18 years with 4 children, she worked harder than any man I've known to make sure we had everything they needed. My mother has been through heck & back but she *always* made being our mother her first priority.

In May 2007 my husband and I found out we were pregnant with our first child. My mother was so thrilled. She went with me to get maternity clothes, helped me pick out names, and started planning for the big day. Five months seemed SO LONG to wait to find out whether we were going to have a boy or a girl, but finally the day came for the most exciting ultrasound of a pregnancy. My husband and I finally got to go back and the ultrasound tech worked her magic. She pointed out the little parts of our baby but something wasn't quite right. The doctor came in and said, "Your baby doesn't have a heartbeat." He kept talking but I couldn't hear him, my whole world had begun to fall.

As we were walking out, I remembered something, my mother. What do I say? How do I tell her? I broke down. I told my mother, "The baby died Mom." She began to cry and told me not to worry about telling anyone else. My mother was there with me the entire 3 days at the hospital. She not once went home to care for herself. My mother held me together during the next few months.

I am now 3 months pregnant with our second child. My mother was just as excited to hear the news as the first time. She told me that my son had sent his sibling from heaven to me. Motherhood is a mysterious thing I have concluded. The joys and heartaches you face are ones only other mothers truly understand. I am blessed to have a mother that helped me learn that through it all you *must* keep going and living your life, not only for the people around you that love you, but for yourself. If you can survive, you will have lived a life worth living.

# *Lois Ernst*

By Alycia Ernst  
(an excerpt)

**M**y two sisters and I enjoyed the fact that our mom was always there when we got home from school. Even though her wallet was usually near empty, she was always giving with her time and heart, and for that, we are grateful.

As a teacher's aide, church educator, member of Beta Sigma Phi and volunteer for countless other organizations, my mom demonstrated to us early in life the importance of community service and helping others. My earliest memories of this would be the times we would stay the night as a family at a group home, where my parents volunteered. I will also never forget the times that we would help her deliver meals to AIDS-stricken individuals. This is an eye-opening experience for a person of any age, but for children especially it taught us early on to appreciate life and cherish our good health.

Our mom was "green" before being green was trendy. My mother instilled in us is appreciation for the outdoors and taking care of our planet. Being a former campfire girl herself, my mom took it upon herself to organize a Campfire group at our elementary school. We have so many great memories from this time. I even remember the cookies she would bring to our classrooms on our birthdays. She had special cookie cutters in the shapes of numbers, and every year the whole class could look forward to having a cookie in the shape of whatever age we were turning.

Although my mother is a religious woman, she has never hesitated to surround herself with a diverse group of people from all walks of life and beliefs, which to me is what being a true Christian is all about. She's a true friend to anyone she meets and would go out of her way for anyone to help brighten their day. Our mother, Lois Ernst, is the most thoughtful, unselfish person we know. She has not only made an impact on our lives, but on the community as well.

# Mary Erwin

By Melinda Gorman  
(an excerpt)

**A**s a young woman, I look up to my mother, Mary Erwin, not only as an inspiration, but a best friend! She has overcome and accomplished more in her 50 years, than most could ever imagine! Throughout her trials and tribulations she has always put her best foot forward and used her experiences to help others.

As a young adult she faced many challenges, which led to poor decisions. Although, she did have three wonderful children during that period, was the only bright side!! After experiencing motherhood, she changed her life in every way. She would then, at the age of 30, pursue her bachelor's degree while working full time. Even with her time stretched thin, she would always find a way to help others. At that time, she would volunteer at Juvenile Hall every Wednesday night and meet with young girls and tell her story, along with sponsoring and mentoring other women elsewhere. While mentoring others and receiving her bachelors degree, she would continue to work up the ladder at work, for the Department of Human Services.

When all three of her children went off to college, Mary and her husband Bill moved to Kernville. Mary now manages 6 welfare offices throughout Kern County, and last fall she entered the Master's program at Cal State Bakersfield. Mary is also in the process of adopting a 14-year old boy, Brandon, and is now fostering a 3-year old girl. Mary is creating a wonderful home for these children. She is definitely 50 and Fabulous!

My mother inspires me everyday! She has so much energy and determination that she exhibits everyday. She is not just an inspiration to me, but she has touched hundreds of young girls and women throughout her lifetime. And now, she is helping children by giving them a great home and life experiences. Friends, family and acquaintances ask everyday: "How does she do it?"

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**These are excerpts from the runner up essays. Thank you to all who participated.**