



## GENEVIEVE'S STORY

Written by Genevieve Coyle



*Above: Sandy with granddaughter Kim and great-granddaughter Finley at left and Genevieve at right*

My grandmother was an amazing woman, and anyone who met her can attest to that. Sandy Swink led a very full life, and I cannot even begin to write about her here. She loved all of her family so fiercely and knew just how to show it. She was constantly thinking of other people. Whether it was sewing intricate Halloween costumes year after year, or making tons of candy each Christmas, she loved putting all her effort into creating things for her loved ones. Sandy spent her life providing for others, and she inspired me every day of her life to do the same.

Sandy had fairly manageable symptoms for a long time, but the disease eventually took its toll. Her symptoms advanced quickly after a long lull. There were bad days, but for the most part, she put on a brave face. She continued to be there for her family, and held on to what made her Sandy Swink.

From her nursing home bed, a few weeks before her passing, I watched as she tickled the feet of her great-granddaughter. Even in her pain, she took joy in making others happy. I continue to look for ways to help others, and being part of Pacing for Parkinson's is my way of channeling her.



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I officially started my training for my first marathon in late June 2017. I had told my grandma about joining Pacing for Parkinson's and that her strength inspired me to push through difficulties. A few weeks before she passed, we spoke on the phone and despite all that she was going through, and all the discomfort she was feeling, she still thought to ask how my running was going.

As her health started to decline, and it was clear her time was growing short, it became important to me that my grandma was alive during my first training run. I chose to run the race for her, and I knew it would mean something to me if she was still here when I officially began my journey. She was alive as I ran those first 3 miles and I spent most of my run thinking of how much I love her and why I was running for her. She passed away just 24 hours after that run. She would have been 80 on June 14.

Her strength continues to propel me forward, in any challenge I meet. And her kindness and love inspire me to show the same compassion for others. Sandy was a beautiful soul, and her spirit lives on in each one of her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.



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