

Hope Story by Sabina Iurillo



Hope. When I hear this word, I cannot help but think of my teenage daughter. She is smart, quick witted, hardworking, empathetic, respectful, accepting, talented and passionate! She does not just talk the talk. She makes hard decisions and walks the walk. I know I am her mom and I am biased...or maybe not.

Let me explain why my daughter gives me hope. She has encountered many difficult situations throughout her educational journey. She has witnessed homophobia, racism and sexism. On many occasions she chose to spoken up. Often this led to her being labelled as being, "too sensitive" and resulted in her being excluded. Yet, time and time again she would do the "unpopular" thing because it was the "right" thing to do.

She has volunteered her time to take part in *Celebrate Your Awesome*. Why? "The event is safe and accepting. I wanted to go, even if my friends were not going, to educate myself and to support the people in my life. I want our community to be a safe place for people to be themselves in."

In the spring and summer of 2020, when the protests started to stand up for people's rights, she decided she was going to take part. Our country was in the middle of Covid-19 and again she chose to fight for people's rights over her own safety. This was not even a question for her. She stated, "If you do not feel safe, you do not have to come with me." I went with her. We proudly marched and chanted.

She has many social media accounts and she is constantly informing me of the injustices of the world (yes there are many) and discusses these with her friends and family. She is always looking at ways to try and make the world better. She talks about wanting the world be to a safe, inclusive and respectful place for all.

She has no idea what job she wants to do "when she grows up" or what she will take in university. This does not matter. I know that whatever she ends up doing she will be making her small corner of the world a better place for the people in it.

My daughter will be one of the many who will be creating a new community, a new generation; one that is hopefully more kind, respectful, equitable, and accepting than ours is now. It is a pie in the sky idea, but I have hope that she and her peers can and will make this happen.

Thank you Katie, for constantly inspiring me, and giving me hope. I Love You!