

Earlier on this year, I was having a particularly stressful time with the college process. The rejections from several schools hit me hard and often blinded me from seeing the great opportunities that I did have at the schools I had been accepted into. Now, this will come as no surprise to those who know her, but my mom helped me through every worry, tear, and piece of mail that came along with applications--I truly don't know where I would be without her. She also reminded me of something that had struck her in her ministry at the church. She recalled the idea of "God Moments" to me, words I had never heard of at the time, but a concept that I know think of as the basis of my faith. At times, the world seems so full of stress and woe that we may find it nearly impossible to see the light through the darkness. It is times like these that I question my faith, wondering if God *really* is there. To me, "God Moments" are unexpected occurrences in my everyday, ordinary life that remind me that there really is a greater being who is watching over me.

My clearest memory of a God Moment happened my sophomore year. One of my best friends was suffering from kidney failure. She was chronically in the hospital and came to a point where she was truly fighting for her life on a daily basis. This was something that, up until then, I had never been familiar with in someone so close to me that was also my age. I felt powerless, as there was nothing substantial I could do to help her, except maybe try to cheer her up. I went to Walgreens and picked out everything from puzzle books to a stuffed animal and even a bottle of gold nail polish. Something in me made me choose the gold over the hundreds of other colors in the aisle that day. I later delivered the care basket to her dad who was headed to the hospital later that afternoon. When he saw the nail polish, he smiled and asked me if I had talked to her earlier that day. When I said no and that the basket was a surprise, his expression was incredulous. He told me that she had asked that morning for gold nail polish. Now you're probably thinking that nail polish may be a very insignificant luxury in the grand scheme of things, but that day I saw God working in my own life as he told me *exactly* what I could do to help a friend in need.

In the past month, I was graced with another God Moment through my experiences in the Glenbrook South/Glenbrook North combined musical. Many of the roles are "double cast," or have two different people playing the same part on alternating nights in order to allow more kids opportunities to perform. My part was double cast with a girl named Lauren from Glenbrook North who I barely knew before this year. After looking at some Facebook photos, my Mom realized

that Lauren was the daughter of a close friend of hers from high school theater. Unfortunately, my mom's friend, Lauren's mother, had passed away a few years earlier from cancer. At that time, my mom had felt a sense of loose ends, as she never really got to say goodbye to this woman who she had been so close with in past years. Somehow, however, Lauren and I had been brought together now to get to know one another by a similar passion that both our moms had for performing. We got very close over the weeks we worked on the musical, and last week, before we performed, I showed Lauren some old pictures that my mom had with Lauren's mom in high school. She definitely was moved in seeing these and later told me "thank you for always being a source of happiness to brighten up my day." I see this as a God Moment in my life, as both Lauren and I were given the opportunity to form a similar bond as our mothers. I never knew Lauren's mother personally, but I feel like a piece of each of our moms' lives on in us, continuing the friendship they began.

Psalm 46 reads, *"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging."* No matter how hard we struggle on our path to success, God is always there, moving us past these hard times, and reminding us that we are loved by Him and the many others He has put in our lives. I see my family and closest friends as God moments in and of themselves, as somehow they can cheer me up in moments I thought happiness was unattainable.

I could go on telling stories about God Moments that I have experienced in my life, but instead I ask all of you to look for these unexpected moments in your own lives, especially in the times where it feels as if there is no hope. When I have doubts of someone watching over me, I remember these moments and find it hard to believe that there was not something greater behind these little miracles in my life, be it a friendship between a second generation, or something as simple as nail polish. Thank you.