

Abby Drees - Age 15

Name of Parents - David and Teresa Drees

Name of Dance Studio - Center Stage Dance Studio

Ok an essay about my appreciation for my parents. Sounds pretty easy right. Nope. Writing an essay to tell my parents how much I love them is very difficult. I don't know what I should say, and I don't know what they would want me to say. There are so many ways I can show them that I appreciate everything they do for me, but there aren't as many ways to say it. For starters, my parents are very important to me. They are my rock and my biggest role models and fans.

My mom has been to every competition and performance of mine except for one, which is amazing based on what is happening right now around the world. My dad has tried to go to as many that he can when he doesn't have to work, but when he does go, he is the loudest one in the audience. I love when my parents cheer me on because it makes me feel supported and it makes me work even harder. My mom always tells me to try my best no matter what. Even if I don't score how I want to, she tells me that it doesn't matter because I tried my best and I should be proud of myself. Along with my mom having a special saying, my dad does too. Before I leave to go to a competition, he always tells me to "break a leg" My mom doesn't really care for that, because I tend to roll my ankles a lot and she probably doesn't want me to get hurt, which I understand. Both of my parents have very special ways to cheer me on which means a lot to me. Another thing that my mom does is cry after I perform. I love when she cries because it shows that she is so proud of me. I adore how much they care about being there for my sister and I. Especially when they have to be at a competition all day long for multiple days in a row.

My parents are my biggest role models. They help me be the best person that I can be. They are both so determined to do what is right and they put others before themselves all the time. They both also help others when needed. Last summer I got my permit and so they had to help teach me how to drive. Some ways that they taught me is by yelling at me to slow down at every stoplight, saying that even my

dog is scared to ride in the car when I drive, and by telling me to "check my speed". Even though they were probably scared for their lives to ride in the car with me for the first time, they did it anyways like parents do and I thank them for that.

Last spring, my parents went through a difficult time. They found out that their son has been suffering with spina bifida his whole life which has caused his kidneys to work at less than 10%. He has had to get multiple procedures done which has been hard for my parents to watch him go through that. They had to give up so much to help keep him safe and as healthy as he can be. For example, they gave up their time to be with him when he needs it most. When my brother was in the hospital, they were both with him the whole time, supporting him and making him feel loved and safe. They also were put in a difficult position. They had to make the choice to take me and my sister out of every competition last year. Even though it was hard for them to make this decision, they thought it was best to help keep everyone in our family safe from COVID-19. It was so difficult to watch my teammates dance and do what I love without me, but my parents making the choice had taught me to be more selfless. Even though it was tough, they had made my brother feel loved and safe during this unfortunate time.

Something that my mom has done to help make me feel better this past summer was that she bought my family bracelets. The bracelets that she had bought weren't normal bracelets that you wear just because you like it, they had special sayings inside them. They said, "you are enough" and "keep going", and this helped me so much because it reminded me that during times like these, you need to grow closer to the ones you love and remind yourself that you matter and keep pushing.

My parents have always been there when I needed them most. They have been there to give me advice or to help me with my homework when I am struggling. But most importantly they surrounded me with their love. My parents have given me so much and I could never thank them enough. Even though I might not get along with them all the time, they still mean the world to me. I might not say this enough, but I love them to the moon and back.