Artist Statement

Anna Disselkamp

Three out of my four grandparents have had cancer. It was difficult to handle, but I have

been blessed enough to still have all of my grandparents here. Each of them had a very different

journey, and with each experience, I too, changed. My grandpa was diagnosed with colon cancer

when I was in fifth grade. The most devastating aspect was that there was nothing I could do.

Then I heard about Locks of Love. I decided that I would cut my hair. I couldn't find a cure, and

I would leave the medical aspects to the doctors, but I could cut my hair. I cut eleven inches.

That experience inspired my painting. I wanted to find a way to portray the difference

that people can make and the precedent they have the power to set if they are not the ones with

cancer. In my painting, a girl is having her hair cut off. The hair, as it falls to the ground in the

painting, turns into breast cancer ribbons. This is because my grandma had breast cancer, and I

wanted to honor her as well in this painting.

The reflection in the mirror is a girl who had lost her hair to chemo therapy, and she is

wearing a pink bandanna for breast cancer. I want this painting to mean different things to

whoever looks at it. If the viewer is a cancer patient, then they may see the girl in the reflection

as being the girl whose hair is being cut. If the viewer is someone who knows someone with

cancer, they may see the girl in the reflection as the one receiving the hair being cut. I would

welcome any other interpretations because art is meant to move people.

My goal through the painting is to inspire and give hope to those who are facing

struggles. That is the purpose of the quotes in the mirror. My wish is that anyone who looks at

my painting feels uplifted. I know that all three of my grandparents surviving is a rare event, and

I know that others do not have that fortune. This painting is a tribute to everyone who's journey

did not turn out the way they desired and a prayer for those who are still on their journey.