A Rosh HaShanah Goodbye
Aimee Goldstein

One year ago on the eve of Rosh Hashanah I sat next to my mom Diana and watched her shallow breathing, but otherwise lifeless body. She no longer resembled the beautiful, creative and vibrant woman she had been even a few months earlier. It had been 16 days since we brought her to Hospice - 16 days since she had opened her eyes, spoken to us, or had anything to eat or drink. It had been 6 years since my mom was first diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer and given less than a year to live. Those 6 years were a gift, filled with Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, birthdays, anniversaries, family vacations and wonderful memories. As my Dad and I sat with my Mom in the weeks before the High Holidays, we prayed for her to finally find some peace and comfort from the pain she had sustained to stay with us for as long as she did. We were visited each day by our incredible family and friends, and by Rabbi Moskowitz, Rabbi Gellman, and Cantor Applebaum, on multiple occasions. We could not have made it through those long days without their love and support.

On Erev Rosh Hashanah we kissed my Mom goodbye and left Hospice for the first time in days to have dinner with our family. It was not more than 10 minutes after we left the room that we got a call saying that my Mom had passed. I knew that she would - she had always been a private person and I knew that she would want to die in the same quiet and dignified way that she had lived her life.

One year later I feel both hope and trepidation. In a few weeks we will have my Mom's unveiling and I know that it will reignite our sadness and
longing. But as the Jewish New Year approaches I also feel a sense of hope that we will move forward with the memories of a woman who always spoke her mind, loved her children with a vengeance, still walked down the street holding my Dad's hand after nearly 50 years of marriage, made it look cool to wear a scarf on her bald head and looked better sick than most people look at their best, and never stopped bragging about her grandchildren until the very end. I am grateful for our Temple and clergy for helping us through this difficult year, and I look forward to a peaceful New Year together.

Aimee Goldstein and her husband Brian are parents to Zachary, Casey and Meri. They have been members of the Temple for 13 years and are excited to be part of TBT’s transition under Rabbi Moskowitz’s leadership.

Would you like to share your story? It can be a High Holiday memory, a first experience or a ritual that is special to you at this time of year. Send your stories to ravsusie@gmail.com. If you missed any of the previous Elul Stories you can go to www.tbtny.org (media galleries/ela stories).