

*Tribute to my Parents Award Winner*  
*Des Moines, Iowa - February 27- March 1, 2015*

*Cali Marie Wilson*

*Age: 13*

*Parents: Christine Wilson*

*Dance Studio: Becky Nalevanko's Dance and Tumbling Studio*

*Hi! My name is Cali Wilson and I am a dancer at Becky Nalevanko's Dance and Tumbling Studio in Pleasant Hill Iowa. As I write this I am 13 years old but by the time I hit the Tribute stage I will be 14. My tribute to my parents is about my mom Christine Wilson and my dad Christine Wilson. No that isn't a typo, my mom is a single parent and in my eyes serves as both my mom and my dad. When I was 3 years old my mom and dad got divorced. My mom was a stay at home mom and my dad worked. When they split up my mom was left with no money, no job and a 3 year old to raise and take care of on her own. As you can probably imagine this was a rough time for my mom, I really don't remember much of it since I was so little. My mom moved us in with my grandparents for a month until she got on her feet and then we moved out, just the two of us. From that day on it was just her and I (as we used to say its mommy and Cali against the world) and some help from my grandparents and aunt. I can't imagine what it is like to be a mom, I'm sure it's not an easy task, but my mom does it proudly everyday no matter what is asked of her. She has been there for me since the very beginning. With every mistake or wrongful doing she is always there to understand. She has put no limits on my dreams and she never misses the chance to tell me that she is proud of me and loves me. My mom has put every ounce of love into me that she can*

*and I intend to spend my entire life repaying her. I've been dancing since the age of 2 because of my mom believing in my dream and supporting it 100%. She works multiple jobs at one time to make sure that I can dance at my studio. We live about 25 minutes from the studio and I am there almost every night of the week including weekends. My mom is always there watching class and helping me to improve. She was a dancer and a teacher so she gets it. Her love of dance helps me to become a better person and dancer because she believes in what dance can give people.*

*For me dance gives me a place to go and become someone else, to tell a story without speaking a word, to let out frustrations and anger. I wanted to write this tribute to her to let her know how thankful I am for always helping me to be happy, protected and nourished. I want her to know that I'm thankful for her kindness, patience, for looking out for me even when I didn't deserve it and for letting me fall when I needed to learn by making my own mistakes. I want to thank her for the limitless hugs, kisses, and support I receive from her each and every day. I could go on and on with all the things that I would like to thank my mom for doing for me but this tribute would be never ending because she does so much each and every day for me that my paper would never be finished. So with that I will finish this up by saying, Thank you mom. Thank you for showing me how much beauty is around me and reminding me that when my world feels dark and lonely that I'm never alone and that you're always here. The words I love you are not nearly enough to express how grateful I am to be your daughter, how much you are appreciated or how much you will always mean to me so I will simply say Thank You mom for being my superhero, my expert-in-everything, and my very best friend.*