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Dear Ben Mikaelson,

We don't always realize the many gifts and talents we have until they are taken away from us. Sometimes we take our lives for granted, when in reality many people don't have the things that we have or the privileges that we enjoy every day.

Your book, Petey, helped me to realize how precious those gifts really are. When I read how badly Petey was treated by others because of his cerebral palsy, I was so sad. It made me think and wonder about all of the people with disabilities that have been and will be treated like that. While reading, I felt sympathy for all people like Petey. With each turning page, I kept feeling sadder and sadder after seeing the experiences he had to go through. Even with that, Petey's personality was still cheerful and his will to live kept getting stronger. I admired his optimistic attitude towards life.

Petey's story gave me a better understanding of what my fourteen year old cousin, Chaz, has to go through every day. He has Down syndrome and deals with struggles like Petey's. For a while, I didn't understand what was wrong with my cousin, or how frustrating doing small things like tying a shoe or reading a book could be for him. Reading Petey made me even more proud of what Chaz has accomplished.

There are two girls at my school who are severely disabled and have been in wheelchairs their whole lives. After reading your book, I smile and say hi to them every day, and every time each one looks me in the eye and smiles. Seeing their expressions made me realize that everybody needs kindness in their lives and to know that they matter.

It's hard to think there are so many good people in the world that are afflicted with horrible diseases like Petey's. This book gave me a chance to see the world through a different point of view. I now know how big of a gift many of the small things I take for granted are. Thank you for giving me the chance to learn so much.

Sincerely,

Delaney Donahue

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