

**The year I got my first deer was the best and worst year for me. I have been hunting since I was nine years old and I love to hunt. Getting my first deer was something I had been hoping for a long time. What made it the worst year was something that I had not hoped for—getting cancer.**

**The hunting year before I did not get a deer and I looked forward to the next year because I was really anxious to get one. When I was diagnosed with cancer, it seemed like it was going to ruin my chance to go hunting. For me, that was one of the worst parts of my diagnosis. But I stuck through all the treatments and the doctors said that I could hunt. I was so excited to hear that; I was ready.**

**On youth weekend I was ready to go out and hunt. The day of the hunt we got up at 4:30 and we sat there talking about where we were going to hunt that day. We went to this spot that we call the Three Rivers. My dad has been hunting this spot for years and he says that he sees deer there all the time.**

**We went in to the woods around 6:00am and we got to the spot. We kept on hearing leaves crunching and branches breaking all around us. My adrenalin was really high. We moved onto a spot called Flat Top where we listened to the birds and red squirrels all afternoon and into the night. At the end of the first day, I did not have any success, but it was a wonderful day anyway. Just being outside in the woods away from the hospital was all that mattered.**

**Hunting is not only about bagging a deer; it is also about being with family. I hunt in Montgomery, Vermont where we have a camp. My family has been hunting for a while now. We started building the camp in 1997 when I was only one year old. I have a lot of great memories about this place. I love to go back to the camp at the end of a day's hunt and talk about the day and figure out where we will go the next day. I love when my dad tells ghost stories about hunting camps. He certainly can get my sister and brother scared.**

**Bagging a deer, though does have its thrills. The next morning of this trip we woke up around the same time and thought of a place to go. My cousin had been seeing a lot of deer signs at the spot so they named the logging road after him— Tyler's road. We got to the spot and we had planned out a push for me.**

**We sat there for about an hour and we started to hear something. It got closer and closer and we heard something that sounded like a deer. We heard it again and my dad told me to get ready. But the deer winded us and my dad saw it flag us as it went over the ridge. At this point, I did not think I would be getting a deer. But a few minutes later we heard the same noise, but we knew the other deer was long gone. We assumed another deer was coming toward us. My dad used this thing called a can call and again told me to get ready and sit very still. At this point it was very hard to sit still because my adrenalin was making my heart pump really fast. I pulled up my gun, a 7mm-08 Remington, and waited until the deer went into the cross hairs. BAM!**

**I didn't see anything but heard my dad yell, "YAHOOOOOOOOOOO." My dad saw the deer drop right in its tracks. My dad and I went up to the deer and saw that it was an 8 point buck. We brought it in to town to the weigh station; my first deer weighed 137 pounds.**

**Being on this hunt with my family made me appreciate that timing is everything. Hunting for deer requires you to be at the right place at the right time. The timing was also right for me for I was out of the hospital and I was able to have this incredible hunting experience with my dad. Time is everything. Having cancer has made me appreciate every moment.**

