

Parents

The gym was alive with the bounce of the ball and the echo of shoes on the hardwood floor. I glanced at the stands, and there they were—my parents—always there. Every game, every point, every win or loss. Over time I realized they never miss it. They are constant, steady, the ones I know will always show up if and when I need them.

It isn't just the games. They work so hard so that I can do what I want: wear the clothes I love, explore new hobbies, chase opportunities. They drive me anywhere I need to go, help when I ask, offer advice when I'm stuck, and correct when I'm wrong. Calm and level headed, they always know the right thing to say.

Their support is not flashy. It's quiet, reliable, constant. They encourage me to be more, to push further, to reach higher than I think I even can sometimes. It's the little things they do that mean the most. They do not do everything for me. They do not carry me when I am in perfect condition to walk. They know that would not lead to independence. Rather, they give me the crutches so that one day, when I'm ready, I can run.

I am grateful for them—not for one moment, but for all the small ones strung together: sitting in the stands, waiting in the car, sharing advice, carrying the weight of my comfort so I don't have to.

Love doesn't always shout. Sometimes it works hard, gives freely, and stands unwavering. That is my parents. That is why I am endlessly thankful.