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## Picture Worth Two Words: Thank You

 December 15, 2014 By [Jennifer Fauci](#)  [Leave a Comment](#)

When Lorraine Hopes of Massapequa was a victim of Hurricane Sandy, the first emotion that overcame her wasn't sadness or frustration, but guilt.

"I had been storing some of my mom's things in my garage," said Hopes, whose belongings along with her mother Sue Fischetti's, were destroyed in Sandy.

"Immediately after the hurricane we noticed everything of my mom's was missing," continued Hopes, who added that most of the debris she sifted through was covered in mud, leading her to believe her possessions were already ruined.



Sue Fischetti and her father, Charlie on her wedding day. (Photos courtesy of Lorraine Hopes)

Among the memories lost were Fischetti's photo albums, including a photo of Fischetti and her father, Charlie, on her wedding day. When Hopes and her mother thought all was lost, their neighbor Leah Walsh, merely an acquaintance at the time, came forward with the 65-year-old wedding photo.

"Leah was amazed that we lived four houses away from each other," said Hopes, who did not know Walsh.

Walsh found the photo on her front lawn and was determined to find its owner, after a unique feeling of happiness that holding the photo gave her.

"She got several calls from people claiming that it was their parents in the photo and they just told her to send it to them, but she didn't trust them," said Hopes. "Leah misplaced it in her home for a year and after finding it again, was more determined than ever to find who it belonged to."

Walsh contacted local papers and took to social media for help. Ironically, it was Hopes' niece who saw the broadcast on News 12 and Facebook.

"When I found out I was amazed because everything else had been washed away and that one photo out of hundreds of pictures was left behind," said Hopes.

Even more amazing was the condition the photo was in after sitting for 65 years in an album and then being damaged by water and dirt.

"It looks like it never went through a hurricane," said Hopes.

"When my mother actually saw the photo of her and her father, tears came into her eyes and she cried," said Hopes. "She held it and kissed it. She didn't care if it was dirty, she was just so thankful to have it back."

The photo is currently being restored and framed by an artist and photographer named Xiomáro, who contacted Hopes about restoring the photo after hearing her story.

"I came across it on the newscast and I have always been interested in restoring photos that were damaged in Sandy," said Xiomáro, who currently lives in Roslyn Heights. "I'm still working on the photo but I've gotten to the point where all of the yellowing and the fading is back to a crisp black and white photo."



Leah Walsh, Sue Fischetti and Lorraine Hopes pose with the newfound photo.

Although the photo is black and white, Xiomáro said it has a more lively quality to it. He is now at the stage of removing all of the dirt and scratches on the photo from the storm, which is proving to be time consuming and difficult.

"I repair the photo in little sessions because if I did the whole thing in one shot, the photo wouldn't be able to handle that much repair and it would be ruined," he said. "I am expecting the photo to be fully restored in March."

As for Hopes, she believes the entire process is a sign from her late daughter.

"I believe in signs and that my daughter is always reaching out to me," she said.

While her mother's photo albums still remain lost, Hopes has now considered looking for her belongings again.

"Honestly, I never thought about pursuing any of it figuring with Sandy, because I thought everything was just gone," said Hopes. "I wouldn't even know where to begin, but if there's a chance that something wonderful like this can happen again, it's worth a second look."