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WEARETHESOLUTION

UNITED TO PREVENT
(WATSUP!)

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HELPTEAMBRENDA

SUPPORTING THOSE WHO HAVE FOUGHT, OR ARE FIGHTING,
THE GOOD FIGHT AGAINST CANCER.

EDUCATING PEOPLE ON HOW TO LIVE AN ANTI-CANCER
LIFESTYLE BY EATING REAL FOOD AND DOING SOME MOVEMENT.

FOLLOW UP STORY FROM Q. 3 2019:

BY RACHEL BRETBRUNNER - HALSEY OR

In September 2018 Labor day weekend I went camping with my family. We had just set up our tent and my kids started ruff housing and I decided to break it up and ended up falling. I was sore and the pain in my knee didn't go away.

October 7 my best friend Julianna asked me to go with her to an event where she would have a table to show people about her cloth diaper service. At the event I went around to all the tables and I meet the KickinCancer guy. I thought to myself, "I don't know anyone with cancer but I will take a folder with all the kicking cancer info in it, anyways".

October 26 I finally went to the doctor and got an x-ray of my leg, because the pain was so bad that I could not sleep at night. The doctor called and told me I needed a MRI because I either had a fracture or a tumor. I went in for an MRI and it was confirmed I had a tumor.

November 7 I saw Dr. Dong, and she said it might be a giant cell tumor that is not cancerous. I had a biopsy of my tumor November 12 and on November 21 I found out it was not cancer just a giant cell tumor so they scheduled a surgery date of November 29.

We were all so thrilled it was not cancer, with all this happening around Thanksgiving I had so much to be thankful for. We always go around the table at Thanksgiving and say what we are thankful for. I raised my hand first to say I was thankful I didn't have cancer.

I got checked in at the hospital about 6 am on November 28, 2018 and they said the surgery would be about 3 hours. I woke up in recovery with my husband at my side holding my hand. I remember asking if everything went well and he told me "NO! They didn't take out the tumor because the tumor IS cancerous and they had to remove 3 inches of your tibia". Now I was on the Cancer train.



FOLLOW UP STORY FROM Q. 4 2018:

BY MARISSA LEIGH - NEWBERG, OR

As many of you know, this journey has been going on for more than 3 years now. On Halloween of 2018, I had surgery to remove my left breast, because the tumor had gotten big enough that the surgeon said it had to be done. (I couldn't have regretted this decision more.)

Fast forward about a year and the cancer came back, scattered in the area where my breast had been, was still in the lymph nodes in my armpit, moved to my other breast, that armpit's lymph nodes, lymph nodes in my neck and clavicle area and into my lungs.

With the help of several medical professionals, including my naturopath, I opted to have my ovaries removed. The estrogen was feeding the cancer and I didn't plan to have any more children. It was better than using chemicals to shut down my ovaries. Along with the surgery, I found a way of eating that resonated with me, consisting of plants and herbs that heal the body the way our Creator intended. Since then, my blood test results have shown huge improvement! I am so thankful that I am on my way to true healing and not using pharmaceuticals to do so.



MOMENT WITH THE BOARD

BY ROBIN PAULISSEN - ALBANY, OR (3 year breast cancer survivor, board member for the KickinCancer movement, and founder of Pathways LLC)

I am Robin Paulissen, a board member of WeAreTheSolution aka the KickinCancer movement. Currently I work for the Oregon State Police as a Operations & Policy Analyst. I bring 30 years of a law and finance background to this organization.

Why is this organization so important to me? Not only am I a 3-year breast cancer survivor, but



during this COVID pandemic my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and her brother, my uncle, died of lung cancer.

I am the Director of Pathways, a community outreach program for KickinCancer, which supports the youth in the families having a cancer stricken member. These youth usually step back so that the family member with the cancer receives the needed attention. But these youth need support through this time also. Pathways volunteers come in as a mentor, support, and/or friend, assisting the youth with what they need at the moment. Volunteers are there to show that they are important and that they may create their lives even going through their family challenges. Pathways is always looking for volunteers to come and join us working with these youth. It is my hope you will be part of this amazing program!

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CHRIS JONIENTZ “THEY JUST CAN’T KILL ME”

BY CHRIS JONIENTZ - SEATTLE, WA (32 year survivor)

Several years into my dream job as a volcanologist in 1988, I answered the phone as duty seismologist at the University of Washington Geophysics Seismology Lab. While answering the phone I brushed my hair back over my shoulder was distracted by a marble-sized lump below my collarbone. I called my doctor first thing in the morning and he removed the lump. A couple days later he called at night asking me if I was sitting down. I was only 38 when he told me it was breast cancer. “Who gets breast cancer at 38, I thought?” Thus, began a lifelong journey with an uneasy companion called Cancer. Every time my companion returned, knowledge and technology had advanced, and every time I dug deep to fight again, with new tools. During this time, I became the FEMA Regional Earthquake/Volcano/Tsunami Program Manager, then the Mitigation Branch Chief where I balanced working while fighting breast cancer.



Once again at age 50 in 2000 I learned my father’s family had a long history of breast cancer where generations of mothers, aunts, and sisters died at the magical age of 38 in the days before early detection, modern chemotherapy, or radiation treatments. Our family history was interesting enough to a maverick young female scientist, Dr King, who thought genetics might play a role in breast cancer that my family was chosen to be part of her study. It was during the second breast cancer episode that my grandfather’s brother’s grandson (who lost his mother and sister to breast cancer at 38) found out I also was going through breast cancer treatment. He told me that Dr. King wanted to test my genes. At this time another of my grandfather’s brother’s granddaughter (who lost her mother aunt at 38) was going through treatment for a recurrence herself. I told her, “Do you realize we are the first generation in our family that has survived beyond 38 due to early detection treatment?” I thought it was harsh treatment but was able to learn to stand-up paddle board while on chemo.

Twelve years later at 62 I was attending a painting seminar in Costa Rica when my chest began to feel sharp pains. I knew my companion had returned. This time I thought I’d rid myself of my companion by having a bilateral mastectomy. One of the chemo drugs had triggered a skin cancer that I had cut out. I was so happy to be done journeying through life with this companion!

Sadly seven years later, at 69, in 2019 I caught a bad flu only to find out it wasn’t the flu. It was leukemia, likely brought on by one of my 2000 chemo drugs for breast cancer. The earlier episodes were easy compared to the 2019 treatment that threatened my life. At one point the physical therapist pulled me from my hospital bed, put a strap around my chest, hauled me out into the hall made me walk. Within months, a miracle cure appeared to have happened in response to a stem cell transplant. This was the hardest fight I’ve ever waged against my cancer companion. I can tell you my tools in this fight – attitude, family, friends, heroes, humor, art, music, food, and exercise. An old friend recently asked, “They just can’t kill you, can they?!” “Absolutely not! Never give up!” I don’t know why, but I’m pretty sure I’ve been saved to do something with the rest of my life. I think part of it is helping others get through this.

LISA WALKER “FOCUSED CREATIVE MIND”

BY LISA WALKER – KEIZER, OR (20 year survivor)

After being diagnosed with breast cancer in 2000, Lisa complete her treatments and was given a clean bill of health. Lisa then turned her energies, and creative mind, to bringing a Cancer Awareness outreach program to Volcanoes Stadium. With the help her oncologist, Dr. Bud Pierce, Lisa’s first Cancer Awareness Night, in 2002 saw 50 survivors take the field before a Volcanoes game. Just a few short seasons later, the number of survivors increased to over 200, as they joined Lisa and the Volcanoes players for a recognition ceremony before the Volcanoes game.

Due to the enormity of the program’s success, Cancer Awareness Night grew into Cancer Awareness Weekend in 2006. Since 2006, the program engulfs an entire weekend during the Volcanoes Schedule, with 300+ survivors, and hundreds more of their families and friends in attendance each year. The program has enjoyed incredible success, and has received national recognition as a community outreach initiative. The program has become a model for similar programs across the country – both in minor and major league levels.

Dr. Bud Pierce, with the Oregon Oncology of Salem, has provided tremendous support to the program by purchasing large blocks of tickets and providing them free to survivors and their families.



REBECCA SMITH “IT DOESN’T DEFINE ME”

REBECCA SMITH – LEBANON, OR (30 year survivor)

My name is Rebecca Smith. I am 43 years old.

I have multiple things going on in my life. I’ve been ill since I was young. No one believed me for years! At 13 I got diagnosed with endometriosis, had surgery, was told it’s unlikely you will have children, Thank the Lord I did later in life. I got worse as years went on. They would treat me for off the wall things from fibromyalgia to multiple sclerosis/RA spinal issues. After 13 surgeries all over my body I said I’m done with this. I finally got a full diagnosis of muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis, disk degenerate disease and scoliosis and spinal stenosis! I’ve had surgery on my back, heart surgery, knees, gall bladder, a full hysterectomy, and several incidents of cancerous cells in the cervical area.

Recently, I also learned I have high white cell disease. So I am dealing with being a leukemia carrier! Day to day I never know if I will have my legs and arms or not. What will work each day is a surprise for me unfortunately. I also get migraines so bad that they may last for days! Sometimes I’m in a wheelchair. Sometimes a cane. Then some other times you wouldn’t know I had anything wrong. It just depends what it chooses day to day.

I get shots and blood transfusions to help level things out, and to stay on my feet. I’m incredibly thankful for KickinCancer to HONOR my fight as the GoTeam...recipient for Q. 3 2020. I know it could be way worse. I’m not letting it, nor do I plan to let it define me!

(Editor’s note: After Rebecca submitted this story another challenge was thrown at her. Ralph, her husband, died unexpectedly on June 6, 2020. Ralph Smith had a massive heart attack on June 5, which caused brain damage. It was discovered that he also had Colon Cancer. So KickinCancer guy is dedicating the Sept Spartan Sprint to this family. We are Racing4Rebecca&Ralph. If you are interested in purchasing a limited addition BLUE shirt, the color for cervical and colon cancer, please email HelpTeamBrenda@gmail.com)

