

**KICKIN' CANCER**



HEB. 10:24

WEARETHESOLUTION

UNITED TO PREVENT  
(WATSUP!)

# KICKING-CANCER CHRONICLE

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**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.

## NO MORE "FAILURE TO THRIVE"

BY FRANCIE NORDIN (DECEMBER 2022 HONOREE) SPOKANE, WA

I am 47 years old and have survived cancer! On 3/23/2022, after 15 months of being on multiple epilepsy medications, I was diagnosed with Acute Panmyelosis with Myelofibrosis. Why am I mentioning the epilepsy medication? Because it was determined that I had a very rare side effect from epilepsy medication, that are naturally "immunosuppressant drugs". I was diagnosed with epilepsy 12/9/2020, I had done a lot of research and I did not want to take regular epilepsy medication. I wanted to utilize natural medication, but after meeting with my epilepsy doctor I had been convinced it was too dangerous to only manage that way. There was a fear put in me regarding what could happen, including "SUDEP" (Sudden Unexpected Death from Epilepsy).



At that time I was very healthy. I had lost 150 pounds, through diet, exercise & counseling, over a 5 year period. Managing my body naturally did not put me in fear BUT dying from SUDEP did, so I adhered to his advice and I started medication. By June of 2021, I had been on 3 different types of epilepsy medication, I was found on my living room floor seizing uncontrollably and my best friend called 911. If she had not, I would be dead today! I was admitted to the hospital due to low potassium, so low that if I had not been sent to the ER, I would be dead. During the course of that stay, they found I had very abnormal blood counts and I was diagnosed with pancytopenia, (low white, red blood & low platelets). A hematologist was brought in and it was immediately decided it was caused by the epilepsy medication and I was to be weaned off one. I got weekly blood counts, and after 4 weeks, start a new one.

By the summer of 2021 my blood counts had never been normal. A bone marrow biopsy by a large cancer center was ordered and it showed abnormality but not cancer. I had developed a heart murmur, my weight was down to almost 130 pounds, I was diagnosed by my primary care physician as "failure to thrive". The oncologist recommended I see an academic center and I agreed. October 2021, I did so and my blood counts were better, my seizures were better, but I just felt awful! He decided the risk was greater without epilepsy medication than with so I continued this path. I hated every minute of it!

I used to manage a cancer center, a speaker for a large pharmaceutical company, on multiple advisory boards for patient assistance, had my own health and fitness company, and my exercise at the time was boxing! I loved life, yet in just 18 months diagnosed with "failure to thrive"! I was angry and decided to take action on what I felt needed to be done. I went to The Mayo Clinic in Phoenix, AZ, January 2022.

I started with my Infectious Disease doctor, who ordered multiple specialty doctors and tests! One was the oncologist there. He did his own bone marrow biopsy and ordered a review of the old one. When

I got the call with my diagnosis of cancer, I was numb. When I was told "your first bone marrow biopsy actually had cancer cells that was overlooked", I was pissed (excuse my language but you just don't know this feeling unless you have walked in my shoes). When I was told I had 6 months to 1 year to live if I did not get treatment to include a bone marrow biopsy, my anger turned to grief.

Options for treatment were inductive chemo to prepare for transplant but in my gut I knew bone marrow transplant was not my journey. The risk of graft vs host disease is very high, painful plus you can die from it. Given my history, something inside me said "that will be your story". We worked on getting my body ready for chemotherapy but my absolute neutrophil count was continually dangerously low yet I had not started chemo. Now down in the very dangerous zone and my liver counts flying high, I had to seek a liver specialist for possible treatment. I saw a specialist and yet she could not confirm the culprit but thought it was the immunotherapy. It is now early June 2022, three months since being diagnosed! I still have to be careful as I am not out of the woods but I am seeing the light at the end of the tunnel!

I now wake up every morning with prayer, meditation, yoga & my thanksgiving journal. I eat a well balanced diet. I consult with my Registered Dietician Nutritionist once a week. There is no more "failure to thrive" on my diagnosis list! I'm living! I'm alive! I'm listening to my body. I've forgiven myself and a new confidence has now replaced fear!

## TA-TA TO MY TATAS - LIFE 2 YEARS LATER

BY CARRIE HAMILTON (OCTOBER 2021 HONOREE)

2 years ago I said, "Ta-Ta to my tatas" It was an extremely emotional couple of days. Waking up in the hospital, alone, due to COVID, with my breasts amputated was a terrifying experience. I was sick, in pain, and could barely hold my phone to call my family to chat with the kids to let them know I was ok. I had never had surgery before and coming out of anesthesia being a type 1 diabetic is not easy! Staying in the hospital alone with no visitors for a few days is hard on its own, let alone as you deal with the "C" word - cancer.

I miss feeling "normal". Not worrying about every ache or pain I have, but I am also very thankful. I'm thankful for my scars. For the amazing team that cares for me. That I am alive, and am able to share my story. My mastectomy anniversary brings a wave of emotions, and I am going to allow myself to feel all of them. To mourn my previous life but celebrate how much I have been able to overcome.



## ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

BY MARIANNE MCNALLY (OCTOBER 2022 HONOREE)

In 2009 I was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer. 2015 brought a new diagnosis, Stage 4, breast cancer which had metastasized to my bones. Since the very day I was diagnosed with breast cancer I knew I would fight hard. Not wanting the same fate as my mother, who died of breast cancer in 2006. So, I accepted the challenge!

Currently I am back to monthly IV chemo. Fingers crossed this one will work for longer than a year! If not, I still have more choices to attack this cancer. New ones are in clinical trials and hopefully will be approved for use when I need the next one. Nine years ago I began a Breast Cancer support group in Salem through a non-profit out of Portland called Breast Friends. I continue to give back by volunteering at Salem Health's Cancer Support Services, as Peer Support to patients. I am also on the Salem Health Cancer Support Board and looking forward to getting more involved with KickinCancer. As you can see it takes a village to care for a cancer patient. As the Martina McBride's song says, "I am gonna love you through it" and they have.



## DISCOVERING MY LIFE'S PURPOSE

BY MARK KAGEYAMA SYLMAR, CA

In late 2020, out of the blue, I began having problems walking. By October of 2020 my right leg began tightening up, which led to me not being able to walk. At that time, I realized that there was something seriously wrong, and as a result, I began doing a deep dive to try to find out what was really going on with my health. After doing one invasive test, after inhumane test, my Oncologist called my wife and I in to give

me a diagnosis. She proceeded to say, "Your cancer is so bad that I cannot cure you. You have stage 4 prostate, bone, and lung cancer".

At that point, it was kind of a relief to know what I was dealing with. It was like a starting gun was going off in my head, telling me that it was time to start on the road to save my life! There was NO WAY, that I was going to die, because there were too many people that I love so dearly, that I had to be there for. I was convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that I was going to be around for a good period of time....that I was going to live!

In late March of 2021, I had a lung biopsy which was botched, and my lung collapsed, which put me in the hospital for a week. This was a very pivotal time in my journey for a number of reasons. Up until this time, I had been a vegan for 10 years, and I thought that I was healthy. Fortunately, a good friend of mine, a nutritionist, told me..."Unless you change your diet, and add animal protein (organic chicken and beef, and wild salmon), I don't think you will be around very long, because your life depends on this." I took what he said to heart, and completely changed my diet, and followed the diet that he gave me. At that time I was very weak. I only weighed 123 pounds. Turns out he was right! The diet did help save my life! Today, I weigh 161 pounds, and exercise daily. I still have a ways to go, but at this point, I have great confidence that I will be around, God willing, for a good period of time.

I wouldn't wish cancer on anyone, but for me, it has helped me find my true purpose in life, and I am so incredibly thankful for every morning that I am blessed to open my eyes to experience a new day! Life is so amazing, and as crazy as it seems, cancer has changed my life for the better, and has helped me see what is really important in life. We are all going to die, and nobody can take their "stuff" with them. So what is really important? I think it is the people we can help and influence in a positive way!



## QUARTERLY THOUGHT "FILLS MY CUP"

BY BARON ROBISON

As 2022 comes to an end I look back over the past 4 years of this KickinCancer movement journey in awe. What started as an activity for brother and sister, has turned into a GLOBAL movement to actually "kick cancer". So what has the last 4 years looked like, and what "Filled my Cup" along the journey.

2018 was the Warrior Dash for Brenda Farris with 42 people in PINK, along with an interview on KGW. Then in August we did the first of several Spartan races with 12 friends. Realizing that not everyone wanted to get muddy or train really hard, the idea of the Lovin'Run was formed and 23 people turned out for the first one. Most importantly, this is developed into a "domestic non-profit corporation" by the end of the year and the GoTeam... concept was developed with Marissa Leigh from Newberg, OR being our first of many GoTeams where we could help those in the fight with cancer.

2019 was year one for KickinCancer and the FOUNDATION was being laid. We gained supporters as we went to Cancer Awareness Weekend at Volcanoes Stadium in Keizer, OR and developed our

own Lovin'Run in Corvallis OR. We expanded our Educational Program with workshops in Corvallis and just north of Albany, OR. We successfully organized three solid GoTeam... activities for Dave Wentz, Rachel Bretbrunner, and Nolan DeHart.

2020 was year two for KickinCancer as we LEFT SALEM with GoTeamBecky from Tigard, OR where I climbed the USBancorp tower. GoTeamRebecca from Lebanon, OR saw me get body slammed by a big time wrestler during an auction. Then GoTeamJennifer from Albany, OR had over 30 cars show for a drive-by.

2021 was year three for KickinCancer and a FESTIVAL was created that summer with the first charity golf tournament called "KickinCancer on the grASS", our annual Lovin'Run-Mavericks League and our inaugural KickinCancer Music and Food event. Support for this 'movement' was growing inside Oregon, the USA, and GLOBALLY.

2022 is year four for KickinCancer and COMMUNITIES are forming outside of Oregon. We are seeing support in Vancouver WA, Olympia WA, Spokane WA, Yuma AZ, Phoenix AZ, Los Angeles CA, Denver CO, along with the Albany/Corvallis OR and of course, our national headquarters in Salem OR. So people as people ask me, "Baron, what fills your cup?" It's the PEOPLE.

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