

KICKIN' CANCER



HEB. 10:24

WEARETHESOLUTION

UNITED TO PREVENT
(WATSUP!)

KICKING-CANCER CHRONICLE

EDITOR: BARON ROBISON

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.

“FROM THE STORM, LOVE WILL FIND A WAY”

BY DEDE MARIE SMITH

In February of 2016 I would stand on the beach of Kauai, with my son Jonathan and I would watch a magnificent storm roll in. The grey clouds appeared over the ocean out of nowhere, chased us down on the beach and poured on us as we ran through the chickens and sand to get to our vehicles. Later at the food trucks, an Islander making blue turtle jewelry would look at my frail, bald boy and speak these prophetic words over us. *“The sky and water are never more blue, then after the storm blows through and you two look like you are in a storm”* There would be a double meaning on this day, I would spend the next years chasing *the blue* after this great storm. You see I was not on a vacation; I was on a goodbye. Jonathan had been diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of OsteoSarcoma in June of 2014. For several months my son Jonathan had fought the good fight, but now he was terminal.

The cancer journey is not for the faint of heart. It will challenge your abilities every day. The trauma responses of fight, flight, or freeze will be activated every moment. My journey as a mom of an ill, and now deceased child, has been one of challenging waves I did not think at times I could survive. Every treatment brings a different reaction, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Gone were the days I could give my dear child a Tylenol, or Popsicle and kiss away the fever or pain. I would learn more about cancer, and chemo side effects than I wanted. I would spend hours traveling from Olympia, WA to Spokane, WA. Driving snow covered roads, weeping, only to pull it together to support my family. Courage would rise up within me when I thought I had none. Even when I couldn't see it, God was working. It is out of pain and suffering that can come a great sense direction, and purpose.



Jonathan was a man with a wife and two very small little boys. He had put himself through business college as a barista at Starbucks. He was an avid golfer. More importantly he was a kindhearted soul, with a deep faith in Jesus, and he cared deeply for his family and community. It was on one such morning, I stopped to get our traditional coffee drink before heading to the hospital to sit by Jonathan. I left my little grandsons in the care of the other grandparents, so Becky, his wife, could get some relief. He would speak of the conversations he and Becky were having about “Living a life that matters”. Jonathan had a dream to remodel the oncology hall, bring color and life into other patients' and families lives, and thus Cancer Can't was born.

“PURPOSE TO YOUR PAIN

BY DEDE MARIE SMITH

Cancer Can't continues to be a viable nonprofit, supporting cancer patients in various ways. In the past few years, the Spokane Convention Center has been the venue for a beautiful gala to honor this legacy. Valuable auction items are gathered every year to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars, to continue important programs. Twenty oncology rooms were redesigned with art, sleeper chairs for families, fridges and microwaves for each bedside. A transportation system was established with the Catholic Community Charities to help patients run errands or get drive through food before they begin puking after completing chemo. A grant program is available to support families who WILL struggle financially. The Christmas Gifts program delivers gifts so memories can continue to be made. The Charitable Pharmacy supports hundreds of HIV, diabetics and cancer patients in need of medications delayed by insurance approvals or other reasons.



The quote that impacts me to this day, “We don't win or lose to cancer because we live or die. WE beat cancer by HOW we live, WHY we live and WHO we live for” - **NO ONE FIGHTS ALONE!!**

It has been 7 years since my son graduated to his forever home in heaven. The death of a child redefines every aspect of your life; being a wife, a mom, and my marriage of 30 years would not survive the hit. Breathing at times became painful. So I would move to Salem Oregon where my daughter Dr. Kristine Medyanik and family live, to start over. Redefine my “NEW BLUE” and find the purpose for my pain.

True to God's Nature, life will always spring forth. Love will find a way out of the storms, and I am blessed to be recently remarried. I continue to focus on completing a book “Into the Blue” a journey of surviving and even thriving amid a grief storm. I am committed to programs that bring families together and have positive outcomes. I will begin working with KickinCancer, and the Oregon legislature to bring the Charitable Pharmacy to Oregon. It will support the health and wellbeing of individuals, save the state thousands upon thousands of dollars, decrease aquifer pollution and so much more.

I have learned that life has storms some more violent than others. When it blows through it can clear a path for something else. My son's last words to me were, “Live your minutes with meaning and purpose mom”. These last words spoken to me from Jonathan have forced me to continue to move forward, understanding that sorrow and joy can co-exist. If you are facing a storm today, I pray you hold tight to the truth that it will pass, persevere in the minutes, and find that thing that gives purpose to your pain.

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RUSS HEDGE (GoTEAM...) "GOD'S NOT DONE WITH ME YET"

BY RUSS HEDGE

In July, 2022 I noticed what I thought was a wart on the bottom of my right foot. I treated it for a few weeks, but it didn't go away, in fact it got bigger and turned black. My wife encouraged me to call the Dermatologist, so I scheduled an appointment. They took a good look and decided a biopsy was necessary. Within a few days it came back as an invasive Malignant Melanoma, Stage 2A Cancer, and I was referred to OHSU in Portland.

At OHSU they found another small spot and did another biopsy and it came back positive as well for Melanoma. Surgery was scheduled for November 11, 2022. They removed a large area of my right instep, and I also underwent plastic surgery at the same time to rebuild my instep. During the surgery they also took out one of my lymph nodes, which after scans and testing, they determined was in my right groin area. This was just to make sure the cancer had not spread. The surgery went well, I spent a night at OHSU and they sent me home the next day to begin the slow recovery process. The area removed on my foot and the lymph node was sent off to pathology for testing.

Life is full of surprises!
On Thursday, November 17th, I received one. The day started off well. I went to my Post-Op appointment at OHSU and was told the plastic surgery they did to repair my foot, after my Melanoma Cancer Surgery was looking good



and I was healing as expected. My wife, daughter and I drove home. I opened my email, where I saw a "My Chart" message with the test results from pathology. I was expecting to see good news. The first part was good. The bottom of my foot where they cut out the cancer looked good. The outer tissue was cancer free... VERY GOOD NEWS.

The next part was not so good. In the lymph node they removed in my groin area they found a tumor. As my oncologist surgeon explained it, "That means the cancer went from Stage 2A, to Stage 3C and further treatment was needed". They were also doing additional tests and scans to make sure it had not gone any further. After the initial shock of the diagnosis, I felt God saying to me, "It is going to be ok. I've got this!" My Oncologist was confident it is very treatable and started things in motion.

On Nov 22, 2022 I underwent a PET Scan and MRI to determine if the cancer had gone any further in my body and become a Stage 4. Praise God the results came back negative and no further cancer was found, so I stayed at a Stage 3C. I have always chosen to live life to the fullest, be positive and encourage others, and that will not change. Life has a way of throwing us curveballs at times, but I am not out and plan to continue to go on for many years. God's not done with me yet!

"THERE IS A CHANCE"

BY CAROLE (SNOWFLAKE, AZ)

My name is Carole and I was recently, but not really (I will explain that in a bit) diagnosed with Stage 4 Ovarian Cancer. The reason it's recently but not really is because I had a hysterectomy 12 years ago and the cancer was present then, but I never found out about it until March 2022. I am pretty sure I would not be writing this if I had been made aware then. I am 63 years old and have lived in the same small town in Arizona my mom moved us to after my dad was killed when I was 7.

I recently went to the ER because I thought I had a kidney infection and learned that I in fact had cancer, which they called "the kind of cancer you want to have if you have to have cancer", and it was the size of a fist. I had surgery to remove the cyst and when the pathology reports came back it turns out that the cancer had metastasized and there is little to no hope. I have never taken well to being told what to do, so I took "LITTLE to NO hope" to mean there is a chance, however tiny it might be, there is a chance.

I will have appointments for port surgery, cancer teach, and whatever the others are needed. I have always been a stubborn person.....kind of a cut your nose off to spite your face person, and I am hoping this stubbornness serves me well. I am striving to prove everyone wrong and show them just how stubborn I can be, because I am not ready to leave, NOT YET.

QUARTERLY THOUGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH MYSELF

BY BARON ROBISON

I would like to HONOR Morgan Davis, KickinCancer's Education Director, with her own words.

"2022 was a hell of a year for me, but it's been precious moments like this that have truly gotten me through. After two surgeries, hormone therapy, and lots and lots of rest, I can finally say that I feel better now than I ever have before. Receiving a cancer diagnosis drastically changed my relationship with myself in more ways than I can explain. More than anything, it showed me how to come "home" to myself. It showed me how to slow down and take care of my body, my mind, and spirit. It brought to light what is truly important to me, while learning how to ask and receive support.



Much love and gratitude for all of you who stay tuned to my journey and for those who have helped me through, including and especially my sweet, sweet pup, Madi. Now off to continue the adventure with my many lessons and blessings of health."

There is always a plan. One year ago, after making a presentation for the East Salem Rotarians, where Morgan assisted me with the making my slide show function for the meeting, I asked her if she would consider being on the KickinCancer board of directors as our Education Director. After further conversations, and personal reflection, she said yes. In June 2022 the board voted her into position, just in time for her to find out that at 25 years old she had Thyroid Cancer. Then in July 2022 at our annual mid-year meeting she learned more about the KickinCancer/Pathways program and it's mission: **"Provide support for the children of families going through cancer NOW"**. This mission hit home for her, since she had a sibling struggling with her diagnosis. KickinCancer has begun applying for grants and her prior experience writing grants has come into play. She became our in house grant writer. As a board we decided to "Walk with Morgan" at the KeierFest parade in 2022. Morgan's life continues to have great opportunities and she is doing work in Southeast Asia for several months. The good news is Morgan has agreed to stay on as the Education Director and grant writer. Thank you Morgan for ALL YOU DO.