



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.

“HEART FULL OF GRATITUDE”

MICHELLE ASHLEY (APRIL HONOREE)

In 2008, during a regular routine exam, my doctor of 20 years informed me she thought she felt a tumor. She sent me to the gynecologist for a biopsy. The gynecologist decided not to do the biopsy because given my age and the location of the tumor, it's almost never cancer. I had a big upcoming trip to Mexico and asked if I could put off the surgery so that I could go to Mexico, since the trip was already paid for. I was told yes,. So I went to Mexico and had a great time. I came home a week later and went back to work.



At the time, I worked 10 hours a day, four days a week and I started my 10 hour workday that following Monday. By the end of my shift, I drove home and took myself to the emergency room. I was feeling absolutely terrible. The ER doctor prescribed me some antibiotics and said that I had some type of infection and sent me on my way. The next day, Tuesday, I worked my 10 hour shift and once again had to drive myself to the ER. They were surprised to see me and see how sick I was, but sent me home again. Feeling defeated by the lack of answers, I went to work again the next day, Wednesday, then back to the ER, again. Finally I asked if there was correlation between my tumor and what's happening? OR was it something that happened in Mexico? Nobody really had any concrete answers.

The following week, I had my partial hysterectomy. They removed my uterus, but not my tubes and ovaries. The week after that, I was told that my uterus was sent off to pathology where it was tested and found to be positive for cancer. I was then told that the symptoms I had experienced the previous week, that had me so many days at the ER, were classic for a tumor. My white blood cell count was certainly low and I was told that was another symptom of cancer. I had to wait more than six weeks for my incision to heal enough to be able to be cut open again; this time to remove my tubes and ovaries. Two surgeries later, and with a heart full of gratitude, I can say that I am happily cancer free today. I continue to have yearly exams and will for the rest of my life, it is a small price to pay and my heart is full of gratitude. God has made a way for me every day.

“FOCUS ON LIVING”

BY CELESTEE GUPTILL (MARCH HONOREE)

“You're going to need to see an oncologist”, words I never thought I would hear. Cancer touches a lot of people. No one ever really thinks it will be them. No family history, in fact no one close to me had ever gone through cancer. “You're going to have to have surgery.” The second terrifying reality I did NOT want to face. The thing every journey has in common is that one day, you're stopped in your tracks, and the world seems to turn upside down. The floor falls out from underneath your plans, and your goals. I was not quite 40, and staring at uncertainty in a new and frightening way.

My oldest daughter was graduating college in just a few months. My youngest was only 9 months old. We had eight other children, one living in Idaho for college, the rest still at home. I thought I was supposed to “be

strong” for the kids, of course. I tried. Some days I would try to stay busy, so I wouldn't have time to think. However, grief is a strange friend. He saps your energy, and your sleep. There were plenty of times I would break down in tears at random moments, the weight of my reality suddenly feeling heavier than I had expected. All night long I would lay awake, sleeping in restless intervals. Sometimes fretting about how everyone could manage without me. Sometimes just more tears. I would hold my baby for comfort during those times. I would stroke his hair and pray God let me watch him grow up.

I was in the hospital recovering from surgery when a friend brought me a gift. It said HOPE. The hope that is in me began to take shape inside of my soul. It was as if, whether life or death, I knew there was an intrinsic value to my life. My pathology came back after surgery: Appendix Cancer/PMP also known as DPAM, a very rare cancer affecting about one in a million. A second surgery had to be scheduled, this time with a specialist. Now that we had a diagnosis, we needed a plan. My oldest daughter got engaged, so my waiting for a second surgery was consumed with wedding planning. The treatment for PMP is surgery with heated inter peritoneal Chemo called HIPEC. It was called the “mother of all surgeries” and had a difficult recovery, with incision from the pubic bone to the sternum. So we chose to hold the wedding one week before surgery.



My specialist was at MD Anderson, in Houston Texas, because most oncologists have never even heard of Appendix cancer. It's that rare. We chose there for treatment but it definitely had its complications to work out. Our Keizer, Oregon community came around us. They helped shuttle my kids to activities. They paid for activities, and brought so many meals! They stepped up and cleaned my bathrooms and vacuumed my house when I couldn't. One dear friends even arranged for people to deliver house plants to keep the air clean.

After my second surgery, I was recovering in the hospital and hooked up to everything under the sun, and with all of my discomforts, my lung collapsed. I felt discouraged, and I started to cry. A nurse came in to check my vitals and saw me in my state of despair. She came over to the bed and I showed her my family photo I had brought with me from the wedding just over a week before. She knelt down in front of me and she said, “You need to get well so you can get home to them!” I began to feel encouragement, which helped me build back some strength. Sometimes it's physical complications, sometimes it's mental. We have less control over physical difficulties, but we can't succumb to the mental game. Discouragement, doubt, and fear, can be consuming, even debilitating. That is why we need our warriors behind, beside and in front of us. Encouragement found me in that low moment. I began the difficult road to recovery.

Five years was the magic number. CT scans, and monitoring for the first five years, but if you make it to five years without a recurrence, the likelihood of it returning drop significantly. This summer, 2024, will be five years for me since that surgery at MD Anderson. At my one year check up, it was confirmed that I was pregnant! In shock, we became a miracle. I met with my oncologist and I told her I believed it was a sign I needed to focus on living, and stop thinking about death. She agreed.

“LET YOUR WILL BE DONE”

MEGAN YOUNGS (FEB HONOREE)



Growing up I had many stomach, bowl, and intestinal issues, causing pain, nausea, vomiting and irritability. When I reached junior high, many times, I would not feel hungry. I would skip meals due to my stomach feeling tight and bloated. When I ate, I would get very nauseous and depending on the type of food I would eat then spew it out. This caused me to lose weight so I would visit doctors along the way but usually leaving the appointments with answers such as “she has bulimia, anxiety or another possible allergy.”

September 2008 I was a high school freshman. That year I was excited to go to school. In December our school would put on a snoball dance, and I was thrilled to attend with a friend of mine. That same week I became terribly ill. What I thought would be missing school for a few weeks became 2 years. September 2010-2011 I was enrolled back to school. During this period, I was considered a “junior” in high school but had no credits from my past 2 years. So, I took on the load of completing my freshman, sophomore, and junior year in 1 year. This is when I met a friend named Travis, who would become my best friend, and is now my husband of 9 years as of December 2023. September 2011-2012, I was a senior ready to tackle the rest of the year in hopes I could graduate with my fellow classmates on time. Although I did the best I could with the time I had, the vice principal sat down with my mother and I to talk about my future. He said at the rate I was going I would still have another entire year to graduate.

December 25, 2013, at 19 years old everything took a turn for the worse. The night before the 25th I felt good. There was nothing that could have led to how the next day was going to take a turn. I woke up on the 25th and my body decided it would not take in food anymore. Whenever I ate, I would feel completely asphyxiated, my stomach would bloat as if I looked pregnant. My bowls seized up completely, I began to spew out anything and everything I tried to eat. I lost 60 pounds in less than 2 months. I was very weak I could barely walk on my own. My mother would bathe me and care for me while my father was at work. Every test we got back from the doctors was negative.

My body was exhausted and wanted to give up. Every time I would fall asleep someone would shake me awake because my heart would stop. My family, including my fiancé at that time, would stay on watch throughout all hours of the night to make sure I stayed awake. I remember during this time my sister was in nursing school learning about cancers of the body. She looked at me with tears in her eyes and said, “If I didn’t know any better, I would say you have cancer.” Because we had no other answers, I took this to the Lord and asked God, “If I have any cancer, please show me what I have to bring comfort.” I heard the word “colon cancer”. I looked up the symptoms on WebMD to find I had every symptom to stage 4 colon cancer. I ended up getting a colonoscopy and endoscopy during the time I was being tested for other cancers which had an outcome of them finding a “foreign substance” in my intestines. To this day I still do not know what that foreign substance was.

When we went back to the specialist, we asked to have me tested for colon cancer and they said because they found nothing in my colonoscopy other than a “foreign substance” they would not test me for that because I was too young. As you can imagine we were terribly upset. They tested me for every other cancer they believed it could be but not colon cancer due to being only 19 years

old. They told us “Good luck on finding someone who will do this for you” I felt like my world was crashing down. I was angry, sad, tired, confused and in pain. But this journey only brought me closer to my faith leaning on the Lord Jesus Christ, that if it were in his will to heal me that it would be done.

Fast forward to February 2014. It has only been a couple of months since my life began spiraling, but it felt like much longer. My fiancé was going to a Portland Trailblazers game in Portland, Oregon. That day I called him before he left and said I do not feel well please stay here, do not go. I had a feeling it is not going to be a good night. He told me he still was going to go, and I should not think negatively. It was around 7pm that night. I was sitting on the couch in the living room with my parents when suddenly I had a bad seizure, so I was hospitalized once again. When I woke up in the hospital, my parents as well as my fiancé and his dad were standing there in front of my bed. I remember feeling so happy to see all of them. The doctor told my parents after they give me the IV there is nothing more, they can do for me. So, they released me to go back home. When I got home, I laid down on the couch in the living room. I did not feel I was going to make it through the night. I could feel as if my spirit was beginning to leave my body. My dad was in the kitchen. I was listening to worship music. I turned on a song that was my favorite during that time “Build your kingdom here” by Rend Collective. I lifted my hands as high as I could to the Lord and told Him, “Let your will be done”. This large mass, which resembled a tumor on my stomach, began to shake like a miniature earthquake and it disappeared. I yelled for my dad and praised the Lord that he had healed me! That night I drank 1 gallon of water. 2 weeks later I was able to consume my first whole meal without any complications. Since then, my stomach and bowls have been completely healed. I am now 10 years cancer free.

QUARTERLY THOUGHT -

“WHY KICKIN’ CANCER MATTERS TO ME”

BY MATT MILLER, ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR



I have always thought I would not really have to deal with the loss of anyone to cancer, but life has proven different. I am proud to say that I have several friends who are survivors and I love that fact that I get to celebrate with them that they are living life and sharing how their lives have changed and are better after winning their battle.

However, I am now walking the journey of cancer that will become a moment where we will honor my dear friend, and who I now a lady I call grandma, Elizabeth Burnham. She was diagnosed with breast cancer at 99 years old. It has quickly spread into her lymph nodes and other areas of her body. As of early May 2024 she is in hospice, and we are having to walk with her through this process of passing. I don’t know where I would be without the constant support from Kickin’ Cancer and Baron Robison aka the Kickin’ Cancer guy. Not only is this an organization that surrounds the person fighting, but also the loved ones who are left behind afterwards. I could not be more proud to be a part of something this great!