



Carol H.

Shortly after Christmas of 2011, I was feeling “full” all the time and lost interest in eating which was very unusual for me. At a routine check with my Primary Care Physician, he suggested I have a Gastroscopy to check my GI tract. We were shocked when the results showed gastric tumors. Everyone suspected gastric cancer. To the surprise of everyone involved, the Pathology report showed Breast Cancer cells even though no cancer was found in either breast or surrounding lymph nodes. Mammograms, self-breast examinations and physician exams over the years were all negative. I am classified as Stage IV Metastatic Breast Cancer.

The good news was that the metastatic cancer cells were estrogen receptive so treatment began immediately with Anastrozole. There were no mastectomies, no chemotherapy, or radiation. Most side effects are connected with the GI surgery. At the time of my diagnosis I was a retired faculty member at University of Rochester’s School of Nursing (SON) but led an active and healthy life. I was shocked by this frightening diagnosis. I was active in many community activities involving health care, nursing education, and my church. As soon as I was able, I decided to utilize my support systems and continue with my volunteer work and my family commitments, enjoying my adult children and my seven grandchildren.

Two years later, I am still on the same routine but have taken advantage of the many excellent services at BCCR including the Metastatic Support Group, the Wednesday evening lectures and the Healing Arts Initiative including Gentle Yoga, Qi Gong, and Tai Chi. I relished the support from staff, facilitators, and new friends from the Coalition. I am grateful for the support of my loving husband of 53 years, family, friends and colleagues during this unknown journey with metastatic breast cancer and I am appreciative of each day.

Do I run out of stamina? “Oh, Yes!” Am I frightened? “Oh, Yes!” Am I always suspicious and afraid of changes in my health? “Oh, Yes!” But I live by a quote from John Wooden, “Don’t let what you can’t do interfere with what you can do.”

Why did I connect with BCCR? **Holly Anderson** was one of my advisees when she was a student. I knew of her talents, charisma, and caring! I never had a doubt about where I would turn for support! BCCR is my safe haven where I can be myself, express my concerns, listen to others and receive help. Yet, I also share my ideas, thoughts, suggestions and prayers with others. I am proud to be Professor Emerita of Clinical Nursing at UR SON; an alumna of Nazareth College (BS in Nursing); UR SON (MS in Nursing) and UR Warner School (EdD in Higher Education Administration). I am now newly appointed to BCCR’s Advisory Council.