



## Beth M.

I was prepared for her call. The radiologist explained that she was going to call at 5:00 on Wednesday evening with the results of my biopsy. I wasn't worried. I had been having a yearly mammogram and ultrasound for the last nine years and was told I had nothing more than a few cysts. What I wasn't prepared for was the news that I had breast cancer. I was confused. I couldn't have cancer. I didn't have time for cancer. I had a classroom of 24 children to teach. I had two teenage girls and a husband that counted on me. I had no idea what I was going to do.

The next few weeks were a blur of doctor appointments and tests to help me put together a treatment plan. My primary care doctor recommended I go to The Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester and my biggest regret is that I didn't make time to go until after my surgery. That is when my straightforward treatment plan had to be drastically altered. I had a lot of very difficult decisions to make and I felt very unqualified to make them. That finally prompted me to follow the advice of my doctor and sign up for a BC 101 at the Breast Cancer Coalition. Meeting with Holly was just what I needed. I left her office with a better understanding of my diagnosis and questions to ask my providers. Holly helped me to become an active participant in my treatment and make informed decisions.

The next six months were a blur of chemo, surgeries and radiation. I never could have made it through without the love and support of my family, friends, my boss and health care team.

Those six months took a toll on my body and prevented me from getting back to BCCR. I was thrilled when I was finally able to commit to some of the healing arts programs, evening seminars and Brown Bag lunches. I drew strength from the women I met at the Coalition who were amazingly supportive and inspirational. BCCR was the one place that people understood what I was going through and made me feel "normal" again. I wasn't a cancer patient or "different" or pitied at the Coalition; I was just Beth.

I credit my medical team for healing my body, but my family, friends and BCCR for healing my soul. I will be forever grateful for the support I received on my cancer journey and look forward to the programs at BCCR that continue to educate and help me heal.