



Joanne H.

Hello. My name is Joanne Hammond and I am a 35-year survivor of breast cancer. With no family history and no personal experience of cancer to draw on, I put one foot in front of the other and moved forward.

In 1981, I underwent mastectomy surgery. When lymph nodes were found to be involved, I was enrolled in an experimental regimen of eighteen months of chemotherapy through Johns Hopkins. Many of the drugs I took are still being used today for breast cancer patients; I was charting new territory when there wasn't much territory out there!

Having never been sick a day up to this point, it was very difficult to pick up the pieces that had just shattered my young and active life. Through prayer and my marvelous medical staff, I slowly found the inner strength to cope.

I became my own advocate at a time when pathology reports were not shown to patients. It was at this time that I perfected my ability to read medical reports "upside-down" - across the desk from my doctors!

During my long journey through breast cancer treatment, I made a pact with myself: afterward, I would spend my time advocating for women and children. I have made good on my promise, working with many different groups for the purpose of improving women's and children's lives.

As a founding member of the original Breast Cancer Coalition, I have become an active breast cancer advocate as well as a regular volunteer for the organization. Every breast cancer experience is personal, and the Coalition is a wealth of information, support, friendship, and knowledge for patients as well as their families and caregivers.

I have made many wonderful and lasting friendships through the Coalition. We are truly blessed to have this organization and its wonderful and compassionate staff to be there and support us when we need them.