



Janet C.

My original cancer diagnosis came in August of 2002, when I was 59 years old and going through many personal changes in my life. My eldest daughter was about to give birth to her third daughter, and my youngest daughter was newly pregnant with her second child. I had changed companies, thinking I might slow down my work, when my husband was suddenly forced into early retirement. A stage IIIB breast cancer diagnosis was a shocking game changer.

For the next 9 months, I underwent a mastectomy, tram flap reconstruction, chemotherapy, two breast revisions, and carpal tunnel surgery. I lost my hair, but not my sense of humor. I revised priorities, turned to friends, family and faith for support. I found great information and kindred spirits at BCCR. By 2004, I was putting my cancer experience behind me and thinking that in many ways I was stronger for the experience. I was enjoying grandchildren, my husband who partnered with me at home and work, and living life on my terms again.

Then I experienced rib pain in 2011. After several doctor's appointments, X-rays, blood tests, scans, and biopsies, the heart-wrenching diagnosis of Stage 4 Metastatic Breast Cancer was attached to my chart. The cancer spread via the lymph nodes to my lungs and bones. There was a large tumor on my femur and I had three broken ribs. There were spots at the base of my skull, shadows on my kidneys, and a tumor in my other breast. The fight began again with renewed vigor. I have made every effort to learn all I can about this disease, and have surrounded myself with positive people. My cancer responds to hormone therapy, and I receive shots each month. I also receive an infusion to strengthen my bones. I will be in treatment for the rest of my life. The mantra is: "scan, treat, repeat."

Once again, I turned to BCCR to participate in wellness programs, discussion groups, and support groups. This is the one place where others are walking the same walk, and "get" what breast cancer can do to you physically, mentally and emotionally. BCCR is one place where I can share my blessings, and let others know that while a diagnosis is devastating, and the life you now live is not the one you envisioned, it still can be productive, rewarding and beneficial. Hearing the word "stable" is music to my ears every month. I take very little for granted and look for beautiful moments each day and ways to enrich others' lives.