



Montha C.

The date I was diagnosed with breast cancer was August 23, 2011. I got the biopsy the day before, and when they called me back I was at home. It was an out-of-body feeling, like they were talking about someone else. I was in complete shock.

After I asked what the next step was, I was given a few names of surgeons. When I called to book an appointment with Dr. Caldwell, they told me he was booking out to the end of September. I was so anxious and could not wait, so they suggested I call his office every day to see if there was a cancellation. I felt very alone, like no one cared. When I finally met with Dr. Caldwell, I was very uncertain about what type of surgery to have. I did not know anyone else with breast cancer, besides a friend. No one I knew had experienced the Stage III that I have. After much consideration, I decided on a bilateral mastectomy and no reconstruction. During my follow-up appointment, Vickie Nugent suggested I attend a support group at the Breast Cancer Coalition. I also began treatment at the Pluta Cancer Center for chemo and radiation. My life changed a lot during this time. I came to the realization that life is uncertain, and it's good to count my blessings one day at a time. Death knocks on your door, and I realized that life is short. The Coalition helped me through my journey because I came for support, especially when my head was bald and I had chemo treatments. I cried a lot during this time. It is so warm and welcoming there, especially the other survivors. Everyone cares, understands, and listens at the Coalition, and provides good suggestions for coping. I feel like I belong because the women there know how I feel. The staff is great too! Very wonderful and supportive.

This experience made me stronger and caused me to look at life in a different way because anything can happen. It made me want to give back to BCCR, because I got so much out of my experience when I needed it the most. Now I try to give my time as much as I can by volunteering and supporting people.