



## Dominique B.

**M**y name is Dominique Boller, and I am the Research Administrator for BCCR. I am a native Rochesterian, graduate of Monroe Community College and The College at Brockport. My background is in written and visual communication. I have self-published three photography books, and written for several online magazines and websites. I am also a seven-year breast cancer survivor.

I remember sitting in the waiting room of the radiology department after having an ultrasound taken of my left breast. I had felt a lump there two weeks before and was worried that I could have cancer. I noticed a newsletter on the waiting room coffee table entitled, "Voices of the Ribbon," published by the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester. My name was called by the receptionist and so I took the newsletter with me. The act of walking away with that newsletter was a lifesaver.

On October 12, 2009, I was in the middle of my work day at a meeting when my doctor called. I was diagnosed with stage II estrogen positive IDC breast cancer. This diagnosis came as a complete shock to me because breast cancer does not run in my family. At the time of the diagnosis, I was a single mother working full time as a tech for a cell phone company. I had a 13-year-old son and was living with active SLE Lupus for nine years.

Emotionally, physically and mentally I was not ready to deal with a new illness, After hearing the news, I drove home and prayed, not for me, but for my son, my brother and my mother. I prayed for them to have enough strength to make it through the journey with me. I prayed for my son to have the courage to keep being a curious, vibrant young man through this family trauma. I prayed that my brother would look after my mother because I was worried this latest health scare may be the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back for her. I cried a little, but after that moment breast cancer never claimed another tear of mine.

The next step in my journey was to interview doctors. I took my time choosing ones that communicated well with me and my family. I wanted my medical team to understand my need to know the process, the options and the risks of every step of my surgical and treatment plan. I had a bilateral mastectomy with lymph node dissection in November of 2009. I thereafter started two months of a Cytoxan and Adriamycin chemo cocktail. Next was Taxol. I experienced setbacks along the way due to my Lupus and extremely low white blood cell counts. The team at Pluta Cancer Center made me feel knowledgeable, safe and confident that my course of treatment and steadfastness would triumph over breast cancer. In June of 2010, I received my last round of chemotherapy.

Today my 20-year-old son is studying to be a surgical technician. I look forward to graduating next December with an MPA in Health Care Management and Nonprofit Management from the College at Brockport. My relationship with the Breast Cancer Coalition began in 2009 when I have diagnosed breast cancer and has continued to this day. BCCR provided the encouragement, education, and empowerment I needed to carry on. In appreciation for their support, and a desire to help the breast cancer community I serve as a volunteer photographer and P.A.L.S mentor for the organization.

As I step into my new life and new position, I do so with a renewed sense of purpose made possible with the support of my family, my faith in God and my relationship with the Coalition. My mission is to lend my time, money, pen and camera to advocate for those with health and healthcare challenges.