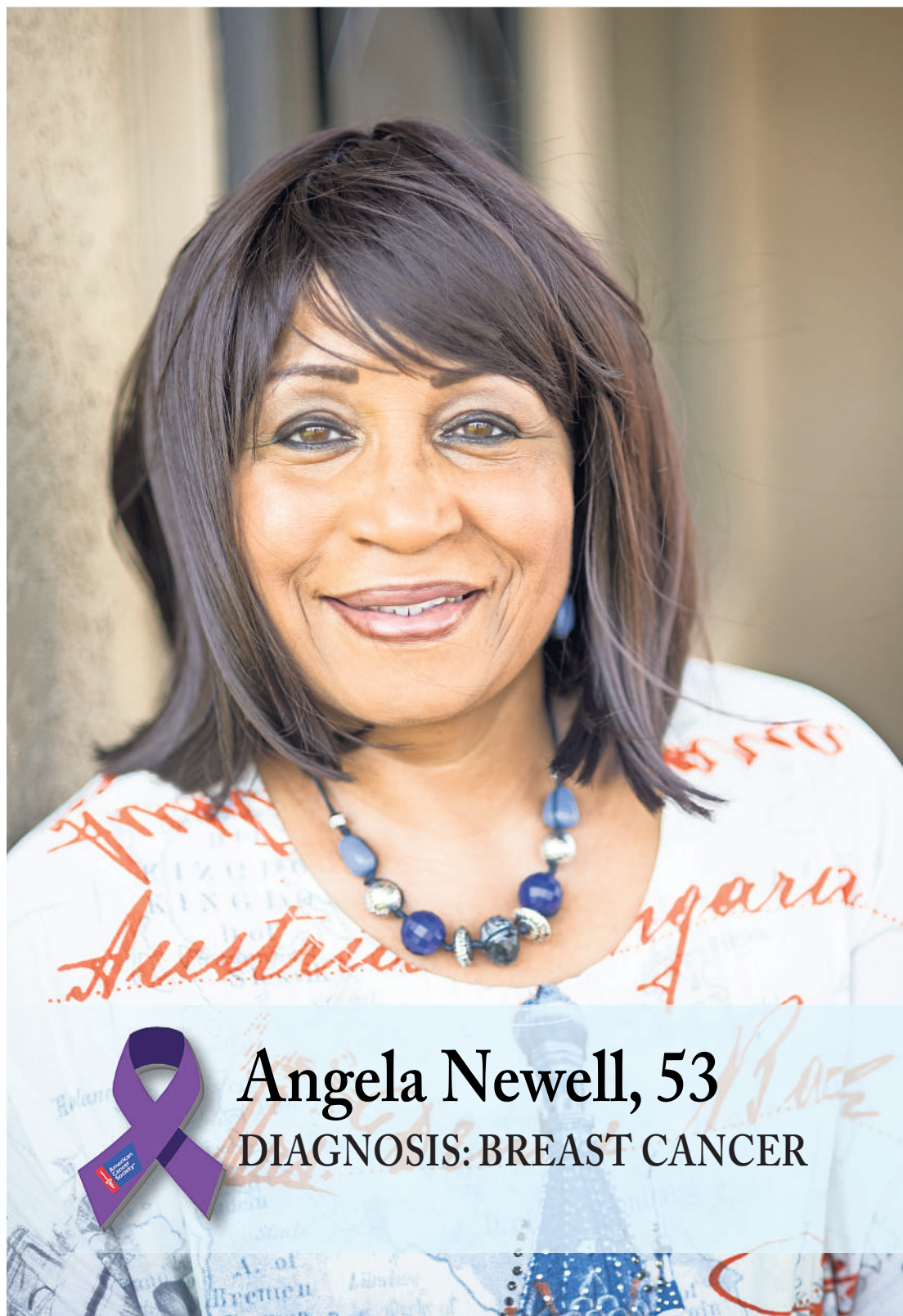


Survival and Hope *Life After Cancer*



Angela Newell, 53
DIAGNOSIS: BREAST CANCER

The Basics:

- **Residence:** Hesperia
- **Occupation:** On medical leave from Hesperia Unified School District - Juniper Elementary, Special Education Assistant
- **Family:** Bobby Newell, 52, son Brandon Newell, 23 (at home), step-daughter Tesha Newell (San Diego)
- **Hobbies:** Likes to cook and especially bake; enjoys quiet time in nature, the High Desert mountains
- **Philosophy:** I need to keep faith over fear. With third-time recurrence, after 10 years it is important to keep my faith and surround myself with positive people. I try to entertain the positive and dismiss the negative

The first time Angela Newell received a breast cancer diagnosis was December 2008. The second time was July 2015. She was told she had breast cancer again in January 2018.

"I was angry, actually," she said, "because I had been experiencing pain and I had talked to my doctors.

"I had emailed them and said: 'I have some pain going on in my chest and something is wrong.

Newell said she was given Ibuprofen, and "they were dismissive."

But the pain got more intense. She told her doctors, "You guys don't think it has anything to do with cancer, but I want a CT scan.

"They did it and saw no evidence of cancer. I thought, OK, great. They gave me pain medication - Norco - and referred to me to physical therapy."

But Newell's pain got worse. Then she asked for an ultrasound, and "they said that was clear. But I said I am not leaving this table because I know something is wrong. I am not making this pain



up in my head - something is wrong here".

"They did a deeper tissue ultrasound, and you could see a huge mass underneath. When I saw it, I knew it was cancer.

"They biopsied it - boom! Positive again!

"I was actually angry because if they had listened to me sooner, I would not have had to endure the pain and it would not have spread to my lymph nodes."

Newell says newly diagnosed cancer patients should "communicate effectively with the doctors. If you are experiencing any pain or discomfort, let the doctors know. Keep that line of

communication open.

Newell said her family members thought, "Wow, this is happening again?"

"And my husband was, 'darn, they took your breasts last time; now it's coming back?'"

Newell said her tumor was inoperable because it had spread to lymph nodes in her neck and it was too large and close to her blood supply. Now she is being treated with chemotherapy for a year, and this month, she began 30 rounds of radiation treatments.

"If the tumor shrinks but is still there and they are comfortable operating, the surgeon might visit that," she said.

Newell is finding her biggest obstacle during treatment is "trying to regain my energy. The fatigue is so great," she said.

She said she forces herself to navigate through regular, daily activities. "You still have to get up, go to doctor's appointments, go to treatments. It takes great effort to do that when you are going through treatments that rob you of all your energy.

"I have lost my hair, and I have neuropathy. It's hard to walk, I lose my balance, I can't button my shirt or zip my pants.

During her first recurrence, Newell said, "I did the American Cancer Society (program) where you buddy up with someone. That buddy calls you and encourages you.

"This time I haven't done anything. I have my family, friends, coworkers. They visit, text, bring food. I haven't joined an official support group.

Caregiver Perspective

When his wife was diagnosed with cancer for a third time, "It was heartbreaking," Bobby Newell said.

"You figure the second time, when they take the breasts, you would think that was very drastic. For it to come back? I felt angry and heartbroken at the same time.

"She went through all that for it to come back, and it came back with a vengeance.

"She will get through it. The treatment is kind of demoralizing for the whole family for what it puts you through. It's not a good thing at all."

Bobby says his wife's journey "has brought us even closer. All we have is each other. Our relationship is strong."

He advises anyone facing a cancer diagnosis to "find a good doctor. Do your homework. Read up on it. Try to understand what is going on.

"Get a second opinion; brace yourself for the worst. Angela was in a lot of pain this last time. She tried to tell them something was wrong. It just turned out for the worst."

Bobby says in retrospect, he would like to have been more influential in decisions about his wife's treatment.

"When it first came up and they wanted to take her breasts, she said no. The second time they said they must," he said.

"She is a strong little lady. We really didn't have a talk about how we feel about it when they took her breasts.

"I know she is strong, but I know that is part of a female. I don't know if she would even want to talk about it. But you can't hold that in, you need to talk to somebody."

“They biopsied it - boom! Positive again!”

"People say, 'Angela, we are there for you. We love you and we are there for you. You are going to make it through; this will pass.' That is encouraging to me. They are so kind and supportive.

"A very special friend shared with me: 'In the midst of your journey, every woman needs five people in her life: clarifier, collaborator, confronter, coach and comforter.'"



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