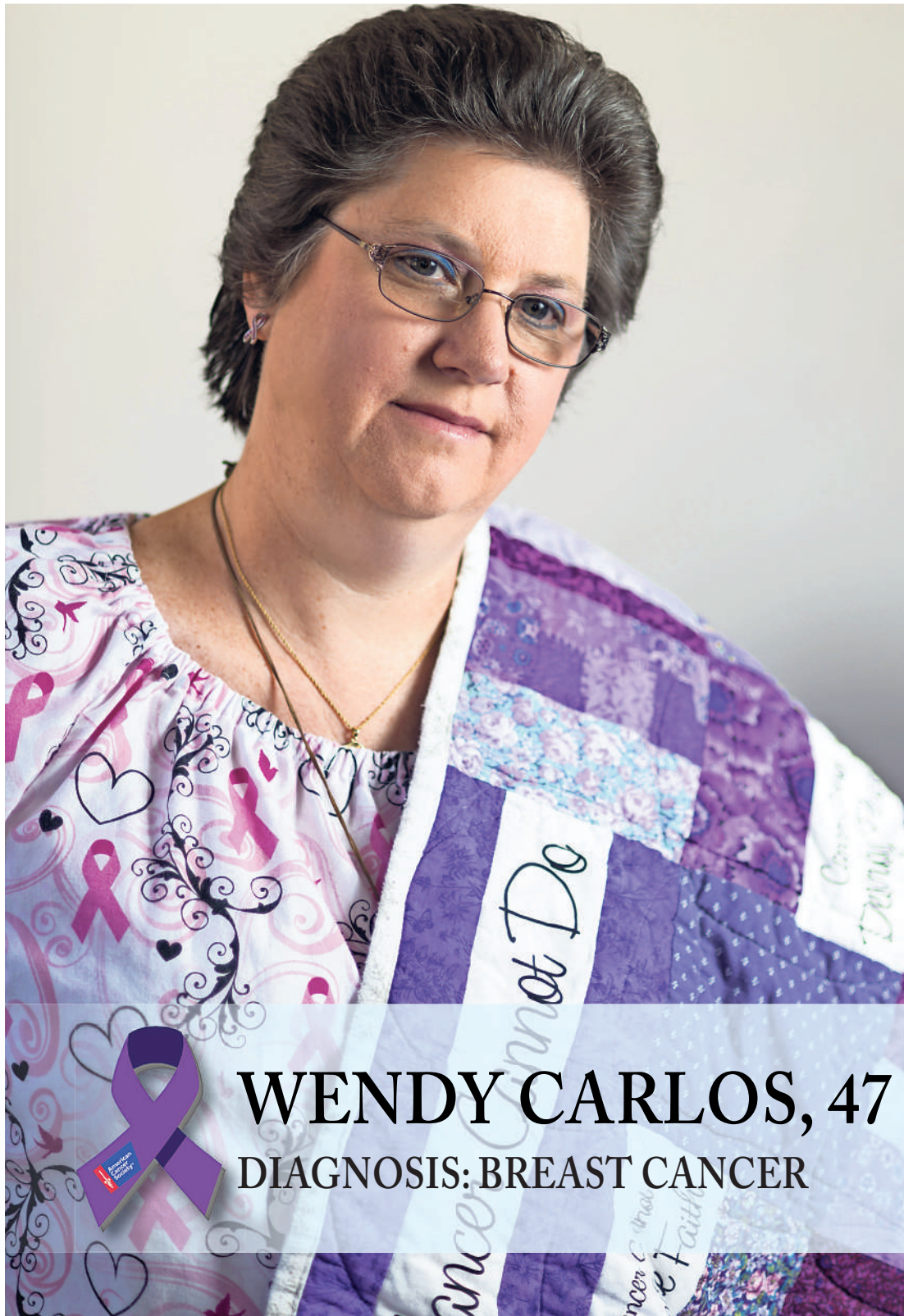


Survival and Hope Life After Cancer



WENDY CARLOS, 47
DIAGNOSIS: BREAST CANCER

"The support group I went to turned me on to Medi-Cal for breast cancer. I told Alicia Griggs, the group facilitator, 'I don't know how much more we can do because I am drowning in debt.'"

With the knowledge that she could have sought financial help from Medi-Cal's program, Carlos decided to look for a new doctor. That is when she discovered she could have been prescribed drugs for nausea, too. "I didn't know there was something you could take to not be sick," she said.

Her new doctor said she also should have received another chemotherapy drug, Herceptin, and she began that treatment, too.

Carlos said when she was diagnosed, "I called my oldest son, Austin, and started crying. He said, 'What's wrong, mom?'"

"I said 'I have breast cancer.' It wasn't even a week and he came and talked to my husband and the next week he moved in. He said, 'I am the oldest, and I am going to take care of my mom.'"

Carlos said her cancer diagnosis "kind of got me looking at where my life was going and where it could have been without support from my family."

"At first I fell apart and was scared to death, thinking, 'I am going to die.' But then, I thought: 'I am OK. I can do this. I am not going to let this defeat me. And I am going to make the best of it.'"

"After my diagnosis, everybody in the family that was upset with someone, it was like the cancer was a healing thing for our family and brought us closer that we have ever been."

Carlos' "family" now includes the cancer support group at St. Mary Hospital in Apple Valley.

Caregiver Perspective

When Diana Dan Riel, 66, heard her daughter Wendy was diagnosed with breast cancer, "I was shocked and in denial," she said.

"Once I got a hold of the idea that this was really happening, I started to do research on the computer."

"After talking to the support group, things became clearer, and I was so thankful to those ladies for the information and the help they gave my daughter."

"The American Cancer Society was a big help also because Wendy had some insurance issues, and we got her an advocate to help."

When Diana suggested Wendy go to the cancer support group at St. Mary Hospital, "She said, 'Oh mom, I don't feel like going.'" But Diana told Wendy to try it just once.

"I realized those women had more information than the doctor would actually tell you."

"Wendy could say she thought something wasn't right, but they would say, 'oh that's normal, we've all been through it.' That was crucial for Wendy and myself."

"Wendy came to a point where I thought she was going to give up. Once those women came into play, she was a whole different person."

"I am not going to let this defeat me".

"The first time I went to the support group, I came with a long list of questions," she said. "The women in the group really got me through it, because they had more answers than the doctors."

Now Carlos is planning a cross-country trip she once thought was impossible. "Both of my boys are in the Army, and my husband was too. We are going back to see my son Christian in Washington, D.C."

"We are really proud of both of them. Austin is a tanker, Christian is part of the Old Guard, and my husband was a Ranger."

From Washington, D.C., Carlos plans to visit a friend in New Hampshire.

The Basics:

- **Residence:** Hesperia
- **Husband,** Guillermo (Willie) Carlos, 53; sons Austin Peacock, 23; Christian Schultz, 18; Dylan Schultz, 15
- **HOBBIES** Singing, reading books, used to paint on clothing (T-shirts)
- **PHILOSOPHY** Trust in God and he will get me through anything

By Alberta Hale Crigler
In November 2014, Wendy Carlos' husband told her he thought she should "get checked out by a doctor," because something was wrong with her breast.

But Carlos waited until the following March. "I was

diagnosed March 15, 2015, a week before mother's birthday," she said.

"I called on a Monday morning to get a mammogram done and they had an opening, and I got in that afternoon."



By Friday, Carlos had a biopsy, and the result confirmed her doctor's suspicion: She had stage 2 breast cancer.

Carlos' cancer was triple positive. She said her treatment consisted of chemotherapy, radiation and double mastectomies.

"As a preventative, I had my ovaries taken out so it wouldn't travel," she said.

Prior to surgery, Carlos had chemotherapy every two weeks for four rounds. The day after chemo, she received a Neulasta injection to boost her immune system.

While chemotherapy was covered by insurance, there was a \$400 upfront copay for the Neulasta.

"My husband is a diesel mechanic, so he makes a good living," Carlos said. "That year he was working 10 hours overtime a week for us to be able to pay for that."



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