

Survival and Hope Life After Cancer



TANYA DE LONG, 48
DIAGNOSIS: PHEOCHROMOCYTOMA
AND OVARIAN CANCER

begin using Octreotide, a medication they hope will put off surgery to remove her remaining adrenal gland. "I am going to learn to inject myself," she said.

On Saturday, de Long will become the third honoree to benefit from the High Desert Angels' Cues for a Cure 2018 8-Ball Tournament & Fundraiser Events. The tournament begins at 3 p.m. at the Rusty Bull in Apple Valley.

The group is putting on eight qualifiers that started Sept. 8 and will run through Oct. 13, with a championship tournament on Oct. 20. Each

“

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honoree will receive a portion of the proceeds.

De Long says money she receives from the Cues for the Cure series will help with living expenses, including the cost of commuting often to UCLA Medical Center for neuroendocrine GI appointments and Cedars-Sinai for primary, hematology and oncology appointments.

"I am on disability. My husband had two heart attacks in the last two years and surgeries, so he hasn't worked," she said.

"We are only on my Social Security disability benefit. Financially it is a super-big struggle."

De Long wants people to know: Some cancers, like hers, can cause chemical imbalances in patients that affect their mental state.

"I am not going crazy, the cancer is causing it," she said. "Don't be afraid to tell your doctor if things are out of balance; it can affect the brain."

Caregiver Perspective



"I first met Tanya about eight years ago when she was a member of St. John Lutheran in Victorville," The Rev. Daniel Wagenknecht said. "I met her when I was serving a part-time vacancy at St. John. I have known her as pastor (at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Yorba Linda) for about a year.

"I have gone to visit her when she was hospitalized at UCLA and Cedars, and visited her and her husband in Apple Valley.

"I reassure her again and again that God has a purpose for all of this. God always assures us he has something good in mind for his children."

For more information about the Cues for a Cure events, call Angie Miller at 760-987-1674 or see <http://highdesertangels.org/Cues-for-a-Cure-Info.php>

The Basics:

- **RESIDENCE:** Apple Valley
- **OCCUPATION:** "Just a mom"
- **FAMILY:** Tiffany de Long, 26, daughter; Mitch de Long, 23, son; Steve de Long, 52, husband
- **HOBBIES:** Archery
- **PHILOSOPHY:** God is the one who gets me through my days. He is there guiding me, helping me and giving me the strength to continue.

By Alberta Hale Crigler

In 1999, Tanya de Long began a journey to unravel a medical mystery. Doctors made educated – but often incorrect – guesses about her condition. They ran tests, sent her to behavioral health specialists, and eventually she got an answer from UCLA Medical Center.

In February 2002, de Long had surgery in an effort to discover what was causing her extreme pelvic pain. Doctors discovered she had ovarian cancer, but "a cyst had ruptured and encapsulated everything," she said. "I was blessed with that because the doctor said nothing else was needed."

But her health did not improve. Doctors did workups that showed "high levels of everything," she said. But nothing met

definitive diagnostic criteria.

De Long's primary care doctor suspected she had another tumor somewhere and ordered a CAT scan. "The radiologist made a huge mistake and missed the tumor."

In 2003, a doctor at UCLA Medical Center reread de Long's original scan and identified an adrenal tumor.

"UCLA said there is no specific (diagnostic criteria)," de Long said. "It not only affects you physically, but behavioral health-wise too."

The disease requires vigilant monitoring and medication.

"In February 2003, after I was on medication for a few weeks, they could do the surgery," she said.

Doctors removed one of de Long's two adrenal glands



and subsequently, she was in remission.

But one morning in March 2012, "I woke up and felt like I had never gotten rid of the cancer they took out in 2003," de Long said. "I was really sick. I was, 'Oh my gosh, I felt just like I did except worse than when I went into surgery.'

"I was 42 when the recurrence happened. They were trying to control (the tumor) with medication since it was slow growing. They are monitoring and waiting as long as possible to take it out because I will have to be on steroids the rest of my life.

"Now the adrenal cancer is causing problems with my liver, pancreas, heart, lungs and thyroid. (We have) natural amounts of chemicals in our bodies, but endocrine cancers cause (excessive) amounts.

On Monday, doctors told de Long she is going to

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