

Survival and Hope Life After Cancer



NICOLE (NIKI) KALLSTROM, 45
DIAGNOSIS: BREAST AND OVARIAN CANCER

“With treatment they said I could live three to five years. One doctor said I had six months.

“I told them only the Lord knows the number of my days. No doctor can put an expiration date on your forehead.

“I think I finished (additional chemotherapy) in March, 2017. They thought it was inactive. They let me rest, then wanted to check me again.

But by November last year, doctors said the cancer had spread and grown.

“We wanted to try a different chemo so we tried one called Doxil. It is also known as the red devil.”

At the beginning of this year, Kallstrom’s oncologist said it appeared her chemotherapy had been ineffective.

“So, I did three Doxil chemos from February to April. (They) didn’t

“

“No doctor can put an expiration date on your forehead.”

think it was effective for me. I need a break so bad.”

But doctors decided once again to do surgery.

On May 22, “I went into surgery thinking for the first time that I would pass away,” Kallstrom said. “This whole thing has been scary, but this one was really tough.”

Doctors found multiple large tumors.

“They opened me up, and they had a big surprise. The tumors were invisible to the CT scan. They did not realize what they were getting into.”

“It ended up being a 12-hour surgery; it was supposed to be three to four hours. There were seven surgeons in there.”

Kallstrom’s husband Ed has been by her side throughout her cancer journey.

“He does all kinds of research to make sure I am getting the best care in the world,” she said. “He goes to every appointment. He has been at every chemo. He has been an amazing advocate.

“This is where I am now: I just got a PET scan and they found five spots on my liver. There is a spot of inflammation in a lymph node in my pelvic area.

“Monday (Sept. 17) I will start very aggressive chemo with three weeks on, one week off. “I am hoping for a break after this chemo. Cross your fingers and pray.”

Caregiver Perspective



Ed Kallstrom said when a loved one has cancer, “the stress of it all is the biggest thing. Life continues on. The structure of life changes.

“You want life to continue as normally as possible, but it’s always in the back of your mind, Kallstrom said.

“My wife tries to keep a positive outlook on everything. She wakes up every day and tackles whatever is on the plate that day.

“She has taken a different approach by taking each day as it comes because nobody is guaranteed tomorrow.”

“Other people go on with their lives with no clue, Kallstrom added. “You hear about friends or family (who have cancer), but when it hits home, it is a totally different animal.”

The Basics:

- **RESIDENCE:** Victorville
- **OCCUPATION:** Stay-at-home mom, artist selling wood-burned art
- **FAMILY:** Ed, 47, husband; Amanda Sobrito, 22, daughter and her husband Jacob; Melody, 14, daughter
- **HOBBIES:** Art, needlework
- **PHILOSOPHY:** All things work together for good; God has a hope and a future for me.

By Alberta Hale Crigler

Niki Kallstrom returned Monday from an ovarian cancer retreat held Sept. 6-10 at Camp Mak-A-Dream in Gold Creek, MT. It was Kallstrom’s second time at the nonprofit camp.

The camp provides an environment for cancer patients and survivors to share experiences through activities and workshops.

“It was wonderful. It was peaceful. It was pure joy,” Kallstrom said. “Everyone there has ovarian cancer. There is nothing like it when you are around other people that have what you are fighting.

“I am about to start chemo Sept. 17, and I was able to meet people

who have already had that type of chemo, and they were able to tell me their experiences.”

Kallstrom’s mother and two sisters are BRCA1 positive. Her mother is a 41-year breast cancer survivor. Kallstrom, too, is BRCA1 positive, and in July 2013, she opted to have prophylactic mastectomies and breast reconstruction to avoid the disease.

But tests on her tissue samples revealed she already had ductal carcinoma in situ.

“I decided to see what was going on with my ovaries. I thought we would remove everything the next summer, then maybe I’ll be OK. That’s what I thought.”



But in April, “they called and said, ‘Niki, we got your ultrasound, you have ovarian cancer.’

Kallstrom’s cancer was Stage 3C. “From December to April, it grew that fast. Cancer was all over the place,” she said.

She underwent 18 weeks of chemotherapy starting in June 2014.

“Not having hair was almost worse than chemo,” she said. “My husband shaved his head in solidarity.

Kallstrom’s health issues continued. In 2015, she had an abdominal mesh implant and hernia repair as a result of complications from her hysterectomy.

In August 2016, a CT scan showed Kallstrom’s cancer had metastasized.

“I went to three different doctors in August and September,” Kallstrom said. “All of them said I had a year to live if I didn’t do anything. I am considered incurable.



These stories of survival, hope and prosperity brought to you by:

Jeep ADVENTURE DAYS
POWER DAYS

VICTORVILLE MOTORS
Chrysler Jeep Dodge RAM FIAT

Chrysler Jeep Dodge RAM FIAT

CALL, CLICK OR VISIT US ANYTIME!
14617 Civic Drive Victorville, CA 92394
760-245-7991 - VictorvilleMotors.com

FIVE DECADES. FAMILY OWNED.

RAM it Forward **IT'S A GAS TO GO TO CLASS** **PATHWAYS TO BUSINESS** **Test Drive**

The American Cancer Society provides a 24 hour service to answer questions about diagnosis, insurance, local support and resources

www.cancer.org or call 800-227-2345