

# Survival and Hope *Life After Cancer*



**SHAINA WHITE, 20**  
**DIAGNOSIS: HODGKIN LYMPHOMA,**  
**STAGE 3**

## The Basics:

- **RESIDENCE:** Apple Valley
- **OCCUPATION:** Was attending Victor Valley College prior to diagnosis
- **FAMILY:** Jenifer Fick, mother, 48; 3 younger half-siblings
- **HOBBIES:** Likes to sing, occasionally dance, play board games

By Alberta Hale Crigler

Cancer was not on Shaina White's mind when she developed a cough in April. After all, she was only 20 years old.

"In April I developed a cough," she said. "I don't get sick very often, so I just figured it would go away. But once I couldn't sing – I am in choir, my mom took me to the hospital.

"I also had itching skin and bumps developing. When I went to the hospital, they took an X-ray and gave me allergy medicine. Then they sent me home.

Two days later, doctors called White to tell her the X-rays revealed a mass on the right side of her neck.

"They did CT scans and found my lymph nodes were swollen. They found a

mass on left side that was growing at a faster rate than the right side.

"I was diagnosed officially July 1. White had a chemo port placed on June 30.

"I just had to get (another) port put in," she said. "After the first treatment, the swelling from the cancer went down a lot and (the original port) could move.

"The effects of the chemo were kicking my butt. At the time, my mom was still working and I had to take care of my three siblings (ages 13, 12 and 7).

Hearing her cancer diagnosis was hard for White. "My mom said I was out of it – I wasn't paying attention," she said. "I couldn't believe it. There were no symptoms.



"I would kind of space out during my appointments. After I started losing my hair and I got really swollen, I thought, 'Oh my gosh, what did I do to deserve this?'"

White is undergoing six cycles of chemotherapy with two infusions per cycle administered one week on, one off. "(This) week will be the end of my third cycle," she said.

"(Recently) I had a PET scan to see the progress. All of the lymph nodes in my diaphragm have shrunk to immeasurable size. Basically, they are gone. But they still are big in my chest and lung area."

White said her family member most affected by her diagnosis is her mother.

"At least from what they expressed, it didn't affect most of them except my mom," White said.

People are individualistic in my family. No one's actions or feelings have changed. It is not a lethal cancer."

"(The diagnosis) has taught me to appreciate my life more. I definitely appreciate my mom more.

"It breaks my heart that she took time off work to take care of me. We have always been financially unstable, somewhat. We have accumulated so many bills, and the FMLA

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didn't come in yet, so we are scared of losing our house."

White said she has not joined a support group, "mostly because I wouldn't have any way to get there. My mom is my transportation right now, and she has to be there for my siblings. Also, I am not very good in groups."

But on Saturday, White will be receiving community support.

She will be one of two honorees at the sixth of eight qualifying tournaments in the High Desert Angels' Cues for a Cure 2018 8-Ball Tournament & Fundraiser Events. The event begins at 3 p.m. at the Rusty Bull in Apple Valley.

The qualifiers run through Oct. 13, and a championship tournament will be held Oct. 20. Each honoree will receive a portion of the proceeds.

## Caregiver Perspective



Jenifer Fick said when her daughter Shaina first became ill, they thought it was a weird cold or allergy.

"It was around this time last year," she said. "It was not getting any better. At the time, I didn't have health insurance.

"Her coughing was really hard. The side of her neck was swollen. We would go to the ER, and they would give her Tylenol and Benadryl.

"We finally got insurance. We went to (the doctor) and they referred us for a scan. When the results came back, that is when we found out."

Shaina and Jenifer recently attended a toll painting class at Victor Valley College sponsored by the High Desert Cancer Connection.

Jenifer said Tasha Champion, who works for Shaina's doctor and is a member of High Desert Cancer Connection's Cancer Awareness Action Team, recommended the class. She also initiated Shaina's application to Cues for a Cure.

"She gave Shaina a little box with all kinds of information and other things. She made herself available to us. She gave us support phone numbers; her personal number is in there.

"There are people who actually do care – they are not just about their job and their paycheck."



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

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