

Survival and Hope Life After Cancer



About Me:

CITY: Hesperia

JOB TITLE: Retired

FAMILY: Jennifer Garrett, 28, daughter; Scott Garrett, 32, son; Jeffrey Garrett, 30, son; Dennis Garrett, 26, son.

HOBBIES: I love getting my hands dirty with being a grandma. I used to love to ride my mountain bike and being outdoors.

PHILOSOPHY: Stay positive and make memories. You are not promised tomorrow. All life is the best memories you have.

“Trust in your higher power; pray a lot”



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

If you or someone you know would like to be featured in this series, please contact Liz McGiffin at liz.mcgiffin@cancer.org.

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

Shannon Garrett, 54

Type of Cancer: Stage 4 lung cancer, liver cancer and adrenal gland cancer.

By Alberta Hale Crigler

When Shannon Garrett got sick at the beginning of this year, she visited a “little clinic” in her hometown, Lemoore, in California’s Central Valley. She didn’t think it was serious.

“I never got sick,” she said. “I have been healthy as a horse my whole life.

“If you looked at me on the outside, you don’t see anything wrong with me. You can’t tell by any of the tests, either.

“I am still hoping that I wake up someday and the hospital calls and says, ‘We are so sorry, you didn’t have cancer, it was gallstones.’

Garrett had risk factors for lung cancer. She was a smoker. She also had lived in Lemoore since she was 13, and she spent many years working in agriculture.

“We would load up chemicals and take them out to fields to load the (crop dusters),” she said.

“I have been sprayed a number of times, and don’t know what I was sprayed with. They did use Roundup.”

“My mother died at 42 from throat cancer. She was from Fresno.

At the Lemoore clinic, Garrett was prescribed antibiotics.

“It didn’t help,” she said, “so I went back and they gave me stronger medicine. It didn’t work and I went back.

“The doctor sent me for an X-ray. When I came back to my next appointment, he told me I had pneumonia.

“He gave me other medicine and breathing treatments with a nebulizer.

“I was going to go back, but my son had come over and wanted to watch the playoffs and drink a beer.

“I said I didn’t want to, and he took me out to eat, instead.”

Suddenly, Garrett told her son to take her to the hospital.

“I wasn’t there 10 minutes and they already had me in a room,” she said. “I couldn’t breathe.

“They rushed me down for X-rays, and after that said they were admitting me.

“It was January 20, 2019. They threw the bomb on us: stage 4 lung cancer, metastasized with liver and adrenal gland cancer.

“They gave me two months to live if I chose to just live my life without treatment.

“If I chose to try chemo, they said it would probably give me only a couple more months at best.

“I wanted to come down here to Southern California because they have better doctors.

“They kept me in the hospital for 10 days, and I had to beg them to let me out.

“I had so many insurance problems. I was trying to get in City of Hope. Of course, we all wanted the best for me.

Instead, Garrett ultimately began

treatment in the High Desert during a visit to the emergency room.

“The oncologist wanted to start my chemo right there,” she said.

“I started treatment in February. I had a round of chemo in the emergency room. They said I was probably the first person who did that.

“They said it would make me feel like I wanted to die, but it never did.

“I would come home to my daughter’s and lay around a day or two and then I was fine.

“I just recently finished my chemo treatments.

“My daughter has four kids and her days are pretty busy. I don’t want to be a burden. I owe her so much.

“My kids are my angels. I am really proud of how they have treated me.

“I go every three weeks for a maintenance chemo in my doctor’s office.

Garrett advises others diagnosed with cancer: “Stay positive. Trust in your higher power; pray a lot. Treat every day almost like it is your last. Make memories with your family.”

Caregiver perspective:

When she was diagnosed with cancer, Shannon Garrett’s children decided she should live with her daughter, Jennifer Garrett.

“It was a blessing,” Jennifer said. “I never had such great communication with my brothers before this happened.

“I have four little ones. We try to schedule shopping and appointments during school hours, or if not, we all tag along.

“We need wheelchair access in our home and in a vehicle, which we don’t have at the moment.

“I found a support group through a church, but we haven’t started it yet.

“We have tried to be positive and I believe it has helped her heal.

“She is an inspiration for cancer patients and survivors for her positivity. We want to start a GoFundMe account and call it Team Shannon.

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