

Survival and Hope Life After Cancer



About Me:

CITY: Victorville

JOB TITLE: Worked in eye care for 39 years.

FAMILY: Mark Tardif, 57, husband; Kyle Moody, 31, son; Jake Moody, 28, son; three "bonus kids": Jordan Tardif, 30, Cole Tardif, 24; and Tanner Tardif, 23; Shirley Flynn, mother; two sisters and a brother; three grandchildren and one on the way; Lisa Vedder, 59, "bestie"

HOBBIES: Four-wheeling – we go jeeping and rock climbing.

PHILOSOPHY: Before, I would admire a flower and say, "Oh that's pretty." Now, I walk over, smell it and take a picture. I appreciate life so much more. It's a wonderful world, and there are so many wonderful people.

"I just had to keep thinking positive"



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

Sue Flynn-Tardif, 58 Type of Cancer: Breast cancer, stage 1

By Alberta Hale Crigler

In 2014, a routine mammogram revealed an abnormality in Sue Flynn-Tardif's right breast.

An image-guided needle biopsy was not possible because the tumor was too deep in her breast.

"Instead, I had a surgical biopsy," she said.

"When I heard the results, I was thinking doctor had the wrong chart.

"I was thinking, 'Why are you telling me? That can't be my name on that chart.' I was in such disbelief.

"The doctor said, 'It is breast cancer. We need to set up a procedure.'

"I said, 'OK, let's do it'.

Flynn-Tardif had two surgeries. The first one was a surgical biopsy in July 2014.

She had a lumpectomy and lymph node removal in September 2014.

The tumor was estrogen-driven and BRCA negative.

"I went to oncology to set up treatments, and the doctor put me on medication for five years and 33 rounds of radiation," she said.

"I did not have chemo, thank you, Jesus."

Flynn-Tardif's journey with cancer brought her family closer.

"My boys were scared, but they didn't let me know," she said.

"But, the look on their faces..."

"We had that conversation: 'OK, if I don't make it through this, just know that my life insurance...'

"I had to have those conversations that are so difficult.

"When I was in recovery, my husband was walking toward me with a petrified look on his face. I am thinking, 'What is wrong?'

"He says, 'You are blue!'

"And I turned to the nurse and started freaking out, screaming, 'Am I dead? Did I die?'

"She said, 'No, it's from the dye for the lymph nodes.'

"I looked like a Smurfette.

"I had so much support it was unbelievable.

"Every morning when I went for radiation, I would feel a hug inside because my faith grew so strong.

"My husband and kids helped at home right after the surgeries.

"The help I received from my coworkers was epic.

"They wore pink for me. They made a paper chain that had 33 inspirational sayings. I would take one, read it, tape it on the counter, and cross off my day on the calendar.

"The doctor I worked for at the time researched online and would call his friends in the field of oncology and get information to help me.

"After treatment, I put myself out there to give positive thoughts to women who came across my path.

"From the moment I was diagnosed, I was very transparent. I felt my mission was to tell women: Go get your mammograms."

As a result, 18 women Flynn-Tardif knew personally went for mammograms.

"Two had biopsies," she said, "and thank God, there were no cancers.

"In the time since, I have had a couple of friends who had breast cancer.

"My cousin, Jackie Flynn, who was epic in my life, recently lost her battle with cancer due to complications after chemo.

"She got pneumonia. She was 67, and it was devastating for our whole family."

Flynn-Tardif did not join a support group.

"I did the walks – the 'Believe' walk in Redlands, the Susan G. Komen one at Dodger Stadium," she said.

"There are some amazing people I have met along this journey.

"Two women who were patients where I worked gave me their phone numbers.

"I had support through those ladies. They were both breast cancer survivors and counselors with the American Cancer Society.

"My sister-in-law is a psychologist and breast cancer survivor, and I was able to meet with her or call her anytime.

"I was very fortunate."

Amazing Warriors:

Sue Flynn-Tardif said during her cancer journey, "I just had to keep thinking positive.

"You find out what you are made of, and it is pretty cool to know you are made out of some pretty strong stuff.

"I have a friend whose mother had radiation and drove herself to work every day while undergoing treatment.

"I was determined to do that, too. I drove myself to radiation every morning, then down the hill to work.

"Some women feel weak in the moment, and I tell them, 'You are so strong. You've got this.'

"It is mental strength and positivity.

"The hashtag that I used was StayStrongAndSparkleOn. Now it is StayedStrongAndSparkledOn."

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