

Survival and Hope Life After Cancer



About Me:

CITY: Victorville

JOB: Nurse for 50 years

FAMILY: Christine Clark, 52, daughter; 5 grandchildren

HOBBIES: knitting, crochet, puzzles, reading, swimming five days a week

PHILOSOPHY: I am a Christian. We are who we are according to the way we live.

“I just knew in my body that I needed another checkup. “I have been fine ever since.”



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**

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

Terrie Murphy, 72 Type of Cancer: Colon, Uterus

By Alberta Hale Crigler

Terrie Murphy says cancer runs in her mother's side of the family.

“My mother died in her 30s, when I was 2,” she said, “and most likely she had cancer.

“Her four sisters died of cancer, and they assume my mother had liver cancer. One of her sister's sons died of cancer of the brain.

“I was a nurse for 50 years, including my last 15 years as a hospice nurse.

“I retired at 70. I was having a lot of high blood pressure, so I said I can't do this anymore.”

When she was about 46, Murphy was diagnosed with uterine cancer.

“I felt something was going on there. They found a tumor the size of a grapefruit in my uterus.”

When the doctor discovered Murphy had cancer in one ovary as well, “I said why incube the stuff? Take everything out. I don't need it,” she said.

“I said, ‘I am too old to have children, anyway. It may have spread. If I can get it out now, I may save myself.’

“I got over the uterus thing and three years later, I went in for a routine physical and a colon exam.

“I didn't really care for the doctor's bedside manner. I think he was pretty careless.

“He (ultimately) removed five polyps and three were cancer. He said, ‘I'll see you in three years.’

“I said, ‘No, you will see me in three months.

“I got another doctor. He went in and sure enough, in the same exact place where five were taken out, three months later there were five more and three were cancer.

“That doctor said if I had waited three years, I would have been dead.

“I told him, ‘You cannot go by your books. They say something, but everybody is an individual.

“If somebody says three months, take it as stock and go ahead and do it.

“What harm is there? It can save somebody's life. I don't know if everybody would need to do that, but is good to do it.

“I just knew in my body that I needed another checkup. “I have been fine ever since.”

“My father was in the Coast Guard during World War II, and he remained in the service for a while after the war, so my brother and I were in a Catholic orphanage after our mother died.

“I assumed you either have your mother's genetics or your father's. My father was cardiac, and now I have that.

“The kind of heart problem I have does not show symptoms.

“I can have a heart attack and have no pain. My only symptom is I get extremely tired, and I know something has happened.

“My last heart attack was August 2018. I lived in Apple Valley then.

“About three in the morning I had indigestion. I thought I'd better go in; I drove myself to the emergency room.

“I came up to the desk and said, ‘I think I am having a heart attack because I have had others.’

“They put me on the monitor and I was right in the middle of it. A cardiac doctor took over and put in a stent. I have had four heart attacks and four stents.

Murphy says her cancer and subsequent heart problems have not changed her outlook on life, although she gave up some independence.

In May, she moved to Sterling Inn Assisted and Independent Living Community.



“I was living by myself. I had ADT and all that stuff at the house, but I realized I could die before (help) got there.

“I put myself on hospice in April because of my cardiac issues and I qualified.

“I may have hospice for six months or a year. I have oxygen; I use my walker because I get short of breath.

“A lot of people don't even know what (assistance) is available to them. There is no reason why they don't.

“There is the ARP system and Medicare that help tell you things.

At Victor Valley College during the recent Relay for Life, Sterling Inn held a rocking chair relay for people who couldn't walk in the Relay.

“When she found out I was a survivor,” Murphy said, “Veronica went and got me a shirt and said, ‘Oh, you gotta wear this.’”

A provider's perspective:

Veronica Fuentes is the community liaison for Sterling Inn Independent and Assisted Living Community.

“We provide the space for the Relay for Life committee to meet and plan. Liz McGiffin suggested our being a part of the Relay in a different way.

The Sterling booth offered “Rocking for a Cure,” complete with rocking chairs, to raise money for the Relay.

“We put out a donation jar,” Fuentes said. “Every little bit counts.

“I found out Terrie is a cancer survivor, and I thought, what a great opportunity to share her life experience.

“For anybody who is out telling their story, it provides inspiration and strength to others who are taking that same journey.”

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