

Survival and Hope *Life After Cancer*



WILLIAM BRADY, 32
DIAGNOSIS: HODGKIN LYMPHOMA

The Basics:

- **RESIDENCE:** Apple Valley
- **OCCUPATION:** Loan officer, Alaska USA Mortgage Company
- **FAMILY:** Jessica Davidson, 33, fiancé; Samantha, 14, daughter, Ethan, 13, son; Hailey, 12, stepdaughter
- **HOBBIES:** Ambassador for Victor Valley Chamber of Commerce; fishing and camping, pretty much enjoying life
- **PHILOSOPHY:** You can never go wrong by doing right. Enjoy life and live with gusto.

By Alberta Hale Crigler

William Brady has known loss from an early age. His mother died when he was just 5 years old. And in 2006, his sister was murdered in Colorado by her boyfriend two weeks after she had given birth to her third child.

Brady was just out of high school and 18 years old when his daughter was born, and his son

was born the next year.

In December 2009, when he was diagnosed with Hodgkin Lymphoma, in addition to concern for his health and future, Brady worried about his children.

"I did not want to leave my children without a parent like I grew up,"



To me, most important for my kids was to break the shortness of life spans. My sister was 24 when she was murdered.

When he was 23 years old, Brady "felt some lumps in my neck," he said. "I had a couple lymph nodes that were bulging out in my neck, and at first I thought they were cysts and I would get them taken care of."

"But I was having night sweats, losing weight and throwing up."

"A friend of mine mentioned I should go get it checked out. I was 6'3" and had gone from 210 pounds down to 163, and I realized there was something wrong."

"I went to the doctor. I googled my problems, like most of us. Night sweats, lumps in my neck: Hodgkin Lymphoma."

Brady had no medical insurance because he had recently been laid off his job.

"I was 23 years old," he said. "Who would think to carry insurance when you were just unemployed?"

At first, Brady was told the lumps were just cysts. But he insisted on more testing.

A fine needle aspiration confirmed Hodgkin Lymphoma.

"A lady, not a doctor, came in and told me the diagnosis," said Brady.

"She told me I had cancer and

started crying. I said, 'Why are you crying? I am going to beat this - it is just a roadblock. I am going to get past this.'

"Within a few weeks, I started chemo. It was every other Tuesday for 12 sessions. The chemo was ABVD. It is very toxic."

"After the eighth session I had a PET scan, and the cancer cells were gone, but they wanted to continue four additional treatments."

"I said rather than do overkill, I would like to stop."

"They recommended radiation, but I said no to radiation because of side effects down the road."

I was already divorced when I was diagnosed. The family, my dad, took it very hard. Everybody took it very hard.

"We were all in shock - here I was a young man diagnosed with a pretty major thing. The staging

“*My biggest fear was of dying.*”

of the cancer was a middle staging: 2B.

"My medical debt was over \$300,000, which caused a medical bankruptcy in 2012. I make good money as a loan offer, but to this day, I couldn't pay that."

I had Neupogen shots (a white blood cell booster) every day. My roommate, Travis, administered my shots. The cost was about \$700 per day."

Brady did not seek out a support group, but he has participated in Field of Dreams at the High Desert Yardbirds.

He also participates in Relay for Life, and he received a \$300 gas allowance from the American Cancer Society to help with travel expenses during his treatments.

"I found Pastor Ted Blair on YouTube," Brady said. "He was diagnosed with Hodgkin Lymphoma a few months ahead of me."

"I followed his journey online. I was really scared. My biggest fear was of dying, especially at such a young age."

"Even though you have a positive mindset, it is still in the back of your mind."

Brady said his journey with cancer has changed his outlook on life "to the fullest."

"Every day is a new day. I tell people I am always smiling, always happy."

"Some days I see the wind blowing in the trees, the sun rising and the sun setting, and I am just thankful to be here."

Caretaker Perspective:



"When Will found out he had cancer, we were roommates," Travis Tapleshay said.

"He was independent for the most part, but I gave him his shots every day."

"I had no formal training. I just saw how a nurse did it the first time and went from there."

"It was very scary. When you are doing something like that, it's not like picking up dry cleaning for a friend, it is actually saving their life, extending their life."

"Having that extra person to help you stay positive is always a good thing. It wasn't just myself; he had a good circle of friends there to help."



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

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