

Dear Reader,

On the morning of February 11, 2025, I called my doctor's office, Newton Family Medicine, to be seen for some annoying symptoms I could no longer ignore. Knowing my history, and my symptoms of bleeding gums, unusual bruising, and worsening fatigue, they directed me to the Roper Emergency Room where I was given a series of tests and imaging. Hours later, as the nurses continued to take blood and more imaging, we started imagining the worst. After 5 years, had my breast cancer returned?



Approximately four hours later, we received incomprehensible news. I had leukemia. We were completely stunned. We didn't realize until later that upon my admission, my white blood counts were off the charts, so high that my spleen should have already ruptured. We cried. We embraced. We prayed.

Fifteen minutes after my diagnosis, I was transported (still in my PJ's!) to the Roper Bone Marrow Transplant floor where I would stay for my first month of treatment. In the ambulance, I heard Christ distinctly tell me that He was holding me, and that He would use my diagnosis to glorify Him. During that stay, He used me to be a witness to my nurses and staff. After several months of inpatient and outpatient chemo and treatment, I had a successful Stem Cell Transplant June 25, 2025 (a lifesaving gift from my nephew and donor match, Witt Pollet). Now, I visit the

BMT unit weekly for monitoring to stay in remission.

Recently, I was honored to be nominated as a candidate for Visionary of the Year for the Blood Cancer United Campaign (previously the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society). The campaign runs from **February 26th - May 8th**! I am asking for your help, whether it be an individual or corporate sponsorship donation, hosting an event, or joining our fundraising team, The Magnanimous Durst Crew! Our team goal is to raise over **\$100,000** which will go directly to research for a cure, patient support, and advocacy.

Our family is blessed to have the resources required to navigate my journey with AML. However, I have witnessed first-hand that other patients and families are in need of resources-things like assistance with mounding bills, childcare, lodging, and transportation-as they navigate unpredictable and life-long treatments.

Please use this link: <https://pages.ils.org/voy/sc/lc26/cdurst> to make a tax-deductible contribution to Blood Cancer United. You can also use the QR code below to give online or mail your tax-deductible contribution to me at 1392 Madison Court, Mount Pleasant, SC 29466. **Please make checks payable to "Blood Cancer United" and print CATHERINE DURST in the memo section.** We will provide you with a receipt for tax purposes.



Interested in getting involved by hosting an event, giving an in-kind donation, or being part of our fundraising team? Reach out to me at 803-463-0617 or catbhodges@yahoo.com. All donations received will support Blood Cancer United for blood cancer patients and their families.

Until There's a Cure, Catherine Durst