

Survival and Hope Life After Cancer



About Me:

CITY: Victorville

JOB TITLE: Owns Schultz Property Inspections with her husband

FAMILY: Wayne Schultz, 50, husband; Hannah George, 22, daughter; Joyce Palmer, 69, mother

HOBBIES: Physical fitness, writer and blogger

PHILOSOPHY: Surround yourself with positive people and whatever is needed in your environment to have an encouraging attitude. Life is important.

“Educate yourself as much as you can”



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

Deanna Schultz, 50 Type of Cancer: Breast cancer, stage 3

By Alberta Hale Crigler

Deanna Schultz thought she had “dodged a bullet” when what she feared was ovarian cancer proved to be a precancerous condition.

After a hysterectomy on May 5, 2016, Schultz believed she was fine.

Five days later, Schultz was devastated when her father died.

Then, in October that year, she found a lump in her breast, and her cancer journey began.

“You have to be your own advocate,” Schultz said.

“I found a lump, but my doctor didn’t think anything was wrong.

“I, of course, went to Google and looked at the symptoms from blocked milk ducts to cancer.

“I don’t think Google is necessarily the means by which you should get your medical diagnosis.”

But Schultz decided to pursue her concerns.

“I went in for an ultrasound, and the technician said, ‘I am going to get the doctor to take a look.’

“I knew it wasn’t good. They did a biopsy right there.

“At first, they thought the tumor was 2 centimeters. When they went in further, it was 4 centimeters; two months later it had grown to 9 centimeters.

“If I hadn’t been an advocate for my own health, I probably would have been dead because it was growing so fast.

“It was HER2 positive – estrogen positive.”

“I had a partial mastectomy and a reduction on the other breast,” she said.

“I had 13 rounds of chemo. The last round almost killed me; I developed neuropathy at week 10.

“(At that point), they did two light chemos and then a triple dose of a different chemo,” she said. “That pretty much burned me from the inside out. I developed scabs and blisters on all my appendages.

“I went through that for two weeks, then had a month reprieve before starting 33 rounds of radiation.

“The first time I went to chemo, I realized there are many people there who don’t have rides, food or caretakers who can help them.

“Your hair falls out, and they couldn’t get even cancer hats.

“My mom is a seamstress. We bought a bunch of fabric, and she made me 20 hats.

“After the second week, my mom and I packed snacks and water bottles (to share). She made hats to take the second time.

“I think that helped her as a caregiver – to do something actionable.

“It was so joyful to come back and see the patients who all had the hats on.”

Responses from Schultz’s family to her cancer were varied but positive.

“My husband is a disabled veteran; his reactions are withdrawing,” she said.

“I don’t think he wanted to face the reality of something happening to me. I think he was very scared.

“My mom has a different personality. Her focus was on taking care of me so my husband could take care of himself and the business.

“I told my daughter to focus on her school work. I told her, ‘I need you to do what you have to do so I can focus on living.’

“My brother and nephew shaved their heads. My church family was very supportive. I had a great support system.

“My husband and I together talked about treatment.

“It was ultimately my decision, of course, but we discussed and educated ourselves to what we wanted to do.

“We chose a three-part approach: holistic, spiritual and medical.

“It is not in our control, but we did all three to cover our bases. We did essential oils, praying, and still did the surgery, chemo, and radiation; that was the best course of action for us.”

Schultz has been in remission for more than a year.

Caregiver perspective:

When Joyce Palmer heard her daughter Deanna had breast cancer, “My first reaction was to cry, but I didn’t,” she said.

“I just looked at her and said, ‘We can do this. We can fight this. We can get through this.’

“I wanted her to feel that there was a light at the end of the tunnel.

“Deanna wanted to just live her life the best she could, but she knew I was there to fill in when she needed help.”

Palmer said caregivers should “listen to the patient and let them do what they still want to do.

“Don’t treat them as an invalid. You have to give them their independence.”

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