

In September of 2006, my journey began with a diagnosis of stage IV metastatic breast cancer with presence in the bones. I was married and 38 years old; my children were three, four and eight years old. Five days after that diagnosis, I started the first of six chemotherapy treatments, followed by 35 radiation treatments at the primary site – immediate response was positive.

The initial tumor was estrogen receptor positive and HER-2/neu negative; so in May of 2007, my ovaries were removed.

In January of 2008, a brain tumor had formed. This was excised and whole head radiation followed. An oral chemotherapy program of Xeloda began.

A neck/spine tumor was found in June of 2008. This was radiated and the course of chemotherapy changed to Abraxane. In November of 2008, Avastin was added to the course.

A PET scan in December 2008 revealed good partial remission. However, beginning in May 2009, I began losing weight, feeling nausea and experiencing weakness in the legs. This August, I suffered a seizure and was hospitalized for six days. This was caused by spinal fluid backing up in the lining of my brain. It is September 20th at the time of this writing and in a couple of days, I will have a shunt installed to relieve the pressure due to build up of spinal fluid. I am praying for successful results.

When the surgeon gave me my initial diagnosis, my immediate response to him was: “What! I just had a perm two weeks ago, and now I’m going to lose my hair?!?”. He installed the med port two hours after that comment and we became good friends. This has been a difficult battle for me, but I am keeping up the fight with a strong faith in God along with the support of family & friends. Cards roll in from strangers across the country, prayers lists have my name on them and many new friends have been made. The goodness in humanity has been astronomically demonstrated throughout this entire journey.

I have fought hard through all of these road bumps and you can too. Be positive as hard as it may be at times.

Robin Maciak
~Millcreek, PA