

I believe everything in life happens for a reason. In March of 2008 my husband was laid off from his job, leaving our family without insurance coverage. My family physician knew our predicament and suggested a foundation where I could receive a mammogram at no cost. My first mammogram seemed routine to me, but was followed by a letter the next week. The letter stated they had found something but not to worry. Most findings turned out to be normal, but they wanted to perform a second mammogram to be certain. My second mammogram was more intense and was followed up with a sonogram. My family physician called fifteen minutes after the second mammogram and informed me the results were bad. In my mind I already knew this. I was diagnosed with stage 2 breast cancer and needed a double mastectomy as a result.

I recently completed my chemotherapy, radiation, and I am struggling with lymphedema in my left arm. I believe that breast cancer, as strangely as it sounds, has made me a better person. I have become a more positive person, and I focus on what's truly important in life now. People currently tell me they can't believe I'm so positive. My good friend told me, "Of all the time I've known you, you've never had it so together," and I agree. Everything does happen for a reason. If my husband hadn't been laid off, I probably wouldn't have ever gotten that first mammogram. This disease has changed my outlook on life. I believe to beat this you must be positive and I have a lot to live for.

I am truly thankful for all the support I have received from the many organizations, my friends and family members. Without the services of some of these organizations and individuals this disease might have had a different outcome.

**Alice Francis**

Young Breast Cancer Survivor and "Linked By Pink" Partner  
Erie, Pennsylvania

Featured in November of 2010