

My cancer story began on August 23, 2011 when I was 41 and diagnosed with breast cancer after a routine mammogram. I was called back to have a sonogram for a “spot” they found. While doing the sonogram they also found a “cyst like” area that was questioned. I was told I had a 2% chance of having breast cancer based on my history, my family history and what they saw. The original “spot” ended up being benign; however, the “cyst like” area turned out to be two different types of breast cancer.

And so began the scariest emotional roller coaster ride I’ve ever been on. My weeks were filled with extensive amounts of information, meeting new doctors, many tests, lab work, results, more tests, and finally life altering decisions that had to be made. I went through these weeks in a haze. I would say the words “I have cancer” to people, but deep down it hadn’t sunk in. I kept waiting for a call to say they made a mistake or I would wake up from this nightmare. Every day was a struggle to just get up and function or even think straight.

On September 29, 2011, I had surgery to remove this awful disease from my body. Removal of lymph nodes showed no spread of the cancer, so I was spared having chemotherapy; however, 33 treatments of radiation was suggested as an insurance policy “just in case” there were still cancer cells floating around. Currently, I remain breast cancer free!

After treatment was over, everything started to hit me. Did I really just go through this? How am I supposed to move on? Are all these physical things and thoughts normal? Will this come back? All these questions were spinning around in my head. I decided to look over the information I had received when I was first diagnosed. One name kept coming up... **Linked By Pink**. There was a pamphlet in the information and I remembered hearing it from a co-worker whose daughter was part of the group, and a nurse had mentioned it. After checking out the website I decided to email them about attending a meeting.

Since contacting **Linked By Pink**, these ladies have become an important part of my life. The first time I met Heather and Norma for coffee, they brought me a comfort care bag. They didn’t even know me, yet knew exactly what I needed. The first meeting I attended was scary, but filled with information and reassurance that all the things I had been thinking and feeling were “normal” for a young breast cancer survivor. I saw vulnerable yet amazingly strong women living their lives and thriving!

I started attending LBP fundraisers and realized how their reach went beyond monthly support meetings. They were helping women right here in our own community through medical grants, college scholarships and help after surgery! I was so impressed with the gestures of this wonderful non-profit organization that I wanted to be more involved. I am proud to say that in August of 2013 I decided to become more active with giving back through LBP. I am currently the Executive Director and I am now assisting with day to day tasks, such as planning events, helping with grants and delivering comfort care bags. It is rewarding to be an active volunteer for **Linked By Pink**, and I am proud and thankful to be able to give back all the love and support I was given.

“The initiation sucks, but the sisterhood is forever”