

I went in for my annual mammogram March 2014 and before I knew it, I was having a lumpectomy on my right breast on April 22, 2014. I was diagnosed with Invasive Ductal Carcinoma, HER 2 positive Grade 3, which I thought meant Stage 3. It wasn't until I met with the oncologist at the RCC that I found out it was Stage 1, which was a relief. My chemo started in May 2014 with a total of 17 treatments, with my last one in May 2015. I also had 4 weeks of radiation in November 2014, which was so much easier to handle than the chemo.

I live alone and was wondering how I was going to do all of this by myself, but thankfully my wonderful friend Lynne said she would go with me to my treatments so I didn't have to be alone. After my third treatment, she told me that she found a lump in her breast and that I inspired her to be proactive and have it checked. Well, she was diagnosed with breast cancer herself and had to go through several radiation treatments and we were both upset that we couldn't be there for each other only by phone and Facebook. My friend and co-worker Pete stepped up and said he would go with me to the remainder of my treatments and he was a godsend in doing things around my house that I wasn't physically able to do because I was too weak and sick. It was all I could do to get through my days at work and thinking to myself: I can't do this anymore and wanted to give up. Being the strong and independent person that I am, I knew I had to remain as positive as possible and be a role model to others.

In October 2014, my friend JoAnne talked me into going to the Breast Cancer Awareness event in Perry Square. It was there that I met the Linked by Pink Group. At 52, I thought I was too old to join this group, but they welcomed me with open arms and a lovely gift bag. This group has been a blessing to me with a wealth of knowledge and just knowing these ladies have been through the same difficulties in their life. It was an inspiration to see most of them in remission and knowing that I could beat this disease. I enjoy being part of this group and encourage others to join as well, because you always learn something new or just venting about your aches and pains and know that they are there to listen.

My motto during this journey has always been "It is what it is...but it will become what you make it"