



Carol Reeder

Carol Reeder's family is very close with three sisters, one brother and a family history of cancer. Carol's grandmother had breast cancer in her 70's. Carol's mother had breast cancer at 59 and then ovarian cancer at 69.

Carol has been receiving mammograms since she was 35 years old and the doctors were always watching her very closely. She says "I knew that one of us would have breast cancer but I didn't expect it to be ME! I joke with my sisters that I am 'taking one for the team.' I would rather it was me going through this than one of them. I remember my mom saying she would rather have cancer than one of us girls."

In January 2008, Carol went for her yearly mammogram. Dr. Robert Forbes, a radiologist at Jennie Edmundson, became suspicious of an area on the x-ray and scheduled a biopsy. The results came back- it was cancer in the duct and it was invasive. A lumpectomy was performed but more tissue needed to be taken so she underwent a mastectomy in February. Carol began chemotherapy in March and finished in August of 2008. She continues to receive Herceptin which is a targeted chemo for her

specific type of cancer and will complete treatment this August. Carol says, "I feel lucky that I have this new treatment because my cancer can be difficult and aggressive to treat."

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"The great comfort to working and being treated at Jennie Edmundson is that you know all the doctors and nurses. I felt like my family was taking care of me," says Carol. "The disadvantage is knowing the terminology and the statistics. I knew that this was not the kind of breast cancer you want to have but we can't choose," says Carol.

Carol explains that cancer really affects the whole family. Sometimes it seems it is harder on them. Carol's husband, Greg was very helpful through her treatment by taking on a lot of the household duties that were once Carol's. He is an engineer and is used to fixing things around the house, but he struggled during this time because he couldn't fix Carol.

Carol's daughter, Emily, is a nurse practitioner and helped whenever she could. Emily was pregnant at the same time Carol was receiving treatment and they both felt they were having the same symptoms of nausea and fatigue.

For the last several years, Carol has worked with cancer survivors' nutrition programs through Wings of Hope. Carol says, "You have no control over a diagnosis but nutrition is something you do have control over." At Wings of Hope they all share the same experiences of wanting to find out about treatments and the emotions they will endure. Carol says "it is nice to talk to people that are five to ten years in remission that say 'you can get through this!' It means a lot."

Carol has also been involved with "A Time to Heal" program for breast cancer survivors. One of Carol's goals for recovering from treatment is to start exercising again by walking several days a week. She has a hard time sitting still for very long and feels walking has helped her heal and recover from surgery more quickly.

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Carol does not mind talking to people about her experience. She says, "Keeping it to yourself is scary, but if I can talk about it, it's not so scary."

When asked for advice she says to trust the professionals and don't be afraid to accept help from other people. As she began treatment she felt alone, but as more people volunteered to help the loneliness disappeared. Carol had a lot of support from her family and friends. They sent beautiful cards and made phone calls every week. Carol keeps a basket next to her couch with all the cards and if she is feeling down she re-reads the cards to cheer her up and give her the energy she needs.

She also tells others, "Life is short, don't waste it worrying." Carol's life is pretty much the same now as before the diagnosis, only she doesn't sweat the small stuff.

Despite having a "bad year" with her diagnosis of cancer, several surgeries and chemo, there was a lot to celebrate. Their 30th wedding anniversary, their first grandchild, and her son was married. Carol says "I feel that focusing on the positive events in life kept me going and I think of 2008 as a good year." ■

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don't waste it worrying"*



Carol & Grandson, Charlie



Carol & her husband, Greg

"I saw my mom go through cancer and she was a good teacher. She made it easier to accept what was going to happen. Even when she was losing her hair, she just took it one day at a time."

SPECIAL THANKS:

Husband Greg

My family and friends

My co-workers at Jennie Edmundson Hospital

Dr. Zlomke, Dr. Montag and staff at the Breast Health Center

Dr. Okerbloom and Dr. Hussain

Dr. Forbes for watching her closely and for being suspicious enough to send her for a biopsy, "he gave me at least a few extra years due to his caution."

Linda Jones at the Salem United Methodist Church for coordinating all the meals.