



Anne Pheiffer: Global Hero of Hope – 2013

I was 56 when I was diagnosed with stomach cancer – my oncologist told me that it was stage 4 stomach cancer and that in all probability, I had only 6 months left to live. My first thought was that my life was in God's hands and that He would decide when it was over. I was not going to give up hope! I made the decision to fight the cancer from the beginning and to remain positive.

This was easier said than done – I first received chemotherapy and after a 3 month gap, radiation therapy. The radiation therapy especially, resulted in making me very ill, but my oncologist motivated me to keep going by reminding me that the treatment would help shrink the cancer and keep it under control.

Four years later, at 59, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. The lump was surgically removed and I received radiation therapy – fortunately, this time I experienced no side-effects. I continued to take the prescribed medication for a year following treatment.

My faith and the support of my family and oncologist helped encourage me along the road to recovery. My husband and sons never lost their sense of humour and this helped me cope better with my diagnosis and treatment. I also made friends with fellow patients and staff at the oncology unit where I received treatment and their support was invaluable.

While I was receiving treatment for breast cancer, I was invited to attend the Mossel Bay Relay For Life (RFL) Event in order to participate in the Survivors' Ceremony. At this time in my life it was so important to be reminded that people cared about me and others in a similar position. Meeting other cancer survivors and listening to their experiences helped prepare me to cope with the difficulties which lay ahead. Attending this RFL Event was a turning point in my life – I was so touched by the care, love and camaraderie among the participants and the beautiful ceremonies to celebrate survivors & caregivers and to remember those lost to cancer. I knew I could not walk away and that I had to get involved in RFL! I have been the Survivor Chair for the Mossel Bay RFL Event for three years now and I love recruiting and spoiling cancer survivors.

I stay in touch with over 200 cancer survivors in my community throughout the year, phoning them on a monthly basis, encouraging them to keep on fighting cancer, as they journey towards recovery. I also organise a Survivor's Day to celebrate cancer survivors. They are a constant source of wonder and I have such great respect for the way they cope, without complaint! Their positive attitude and perseverance is inspiring.

I am also involved in helping to manage other fundraising projects for CANSA, such as Shavathon and organise SunSmart Awareness opportunities in December.

Cancer made me realise that life is precious and that one is able to be strong in the face of adversity – stronger than you might think possible. I am so thankful to have survived stomach and breast cancer. It has motivated me to reach out to other cancer survivors who need support and encouragement.

One World - One Hope!

CELEBRATE

REMEMBER

FIGHT BACK