

Reflections of a Survivor~

I was diagnosed in November 2004 with breast cancer. I “accidentally” found my lump while I was in the shower and was completely convinced at the time that it was absolutely nothing. I had no family history of breast cancer and was a 33-year old, otherwise healthy young woman. I had a double mastectomy in December 2004, went through a round of chemotherapy and then radiation. In October 2007 I had a recurrence of the disease and discovered that the breast cancer had returned and metastasized to my bones. I have since been on a couple different forms of chemotherapy and we continue trying to find a treatment that will slow the progression of the disease while allowing me to maintain my quality of life.

Throughout my entire breast cancer journey I have been lucky enough to have received a tremendous amount of support from my family and friends. They have been with me every step of the way – literally! They walk with me each year at The Race for the Cure! It means a lot to me that they are there walking next to me. I always say that breast cancer is not a fight you can do alone and the Race is definitely proof that I am not alone.

The Race is an extraordinary experience from a survivor’s perspective and for the members of the community that participate. Where else can you find 25,000 people walking together for the exact same cause? Knowing that everyone there is celebrating a life, striving towards a cure and a world without breast cancer is amazing.

It is very emotional for me as a survivor to see the “sea of pink” women and men standing together during the survivor ceremony. Seeing people there that have had breast cancer 20 or 30 years ago is remarkable and it gives me hope. It is the hope that I will be there, participating in another survivor ceremony, for many more years to come, that keeps me going everyday.

Michelle Oleyar, Survivor and Activist