

ST. CLAIR NEWS-AEGIS

Lacie's Story: 'Now I can speak from a place of experience with cancer'

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Lacie (standing) and her grandmother, Jean Hepstall, both battle against cancer. Photo submitted

In November 2017, Lacie found something she did not want to find – a breast lump. This feeling brought fear to Lacie because her mother had been diagnosed with breast cancer just three years prior and Lacie had walked alongside her mom, Sherry Vann, as a co-survivor.

https://www.newsaeigis.com/community/lacie-s-story-now-i-can-speak-from-a-place/article_c7849166-dbc8-11e8-b2e3-6f294bfa298b.html

On November 21, 2017, just two days before Thanksgiving, Lacie received the call that she had triple negative breast cancer. “Hearing I had triple negative breast cancer was frightful. Triple negative is a more aggressive form of breast cancer that carries a higher rate of recurrence and death.”

Over the next five months Lacie took on chemotherapy treatments like a trooper in addition to an unplanned surgery. Throughout her treatment, Lacie continued her work as a registered nurse at UAB as a member of the Medical Emergency Team (MET). The MET consists of two specially trained nurses who are prepared to provide rapid response at a moment’s notice, bringing expertise and assistance to nurses when their patients experience a sudden change in condition or a life-threatening situation. “It became physically hard to push beds at times but I wanted to continue caring for others and my team was very supportive.”

As if there was not enough going on in Lacie’s life, her grandmother, Jean Hepstall, was diagnosed just two months after Lacie with Angiosarcoma (cancer of the inner lining of the blood vessels). Lacie’s mom, Sherry, created a “triage” area to help care for both her mother and daughter while Lacie’s husband and daughter provided support as well. Lacie and her grandmother took several chemotherapy and radiation treatments together side by side, which brought comfort to an otherwise lonely time.

In early 2018, Lacie was given Kristen Noles’ name to contact for support during her breast cancer journey. Kristen, a breast cancer survivor, volunteer with Forge Breast Cancer Survivor Center and registered nurse, connected Lacie with Forge Breast Cancer Survivor Center. “Forge helped me and spent a tremendous amount of time just listening to me. It was a warm and loving conversation and. I just needed someone to talk to. Then I received an envelope filled with helpful resources within just a few days.” The resources included information on a gardening class where gardening topics are tied to survivorship topics. Although Lacie and her mom did not have time to go to the class, they wanted to go. So, they spent five hours one spring day driving from Springville to Birmingham, where they attended a Forge Gardening Class and made Fairy Gardens as a reminder that the “little things in life” matter.

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Although Lacie still has three surgeries ahead of her, she finds reading her bible and time spent with other believers, family, dear friends and her Sunday School class to be most helpful. “Just knowing that others are praying for us is so comforting.” Lacie has found strength in a verse that her brother shared with her – “Do not be afraid, just believe.” (Mark 5:36)

Lacie hopes to train a miniature horse to do therapy through Hand in Paw which has been one of her goals and get more involved with Forge because she knows they are always there for her and that she can call on them anytime.

For more information about Forge Breast Cancer Survivor Center’s services or to learn about volunteering with Forge, visit Forge’s website at www.forgeon.org or call [205-838-6159](tel:205-838-6159).



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