

### **Ava Dowell-Smith**

Like many other survivors, my life was put on hold June 2011. I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I realized at that very moment I had to regroup, but I realized that “Why me?” was a question I refuse to ask. I have cancer, but it will never have me. All I heard was “Triple Negative”, words that sound as if I was in the local Starbucks ordering drink of death by foam. This news was unacceptable. I knew I had to get in positive attitude mode. I must advocate, research, embrace, and do all I can to help find a CURE. I had to be a dedicated woman, like others that have paved the way for me. NO PITY PARTY here. I went through bi-lateral surgery, eight chemo treatments every three weeks. It was like a human fungus going through my body. I never complain. I had to LIVE. I have a purpose and obligation to help others to live. It’s not about the hair nor breasts, it’s about life. I want to be a 2017 Fae of Breast Cancer, because I BELIEVE, that with community, advanced treatments, new options, conversation, support system(s), integrative approach to heal and THRIVE, cancer research holds a promise! I will fight for others that can’t fight from themselves. I’m a happy breast cancer survivor. Outreach is so important.