

Connie Winebarger

My story began three years ago. At my yearly checkup I told my doctor I was concerned about changes in the way I looked. She suggested we wait six months. The very next day I got a call from her. She changed her mind about waiting. I am so glad she did! December 23, 2013 Dr. Tim Edmisten aspirated a cyst and assured me it was okay. At my follow up appointment I told Dr. Edmisten that I knew something was still wrong. He sent me to Watauga Medical Center for an ultrasound. I knew I was right to be concerned when the radiologist spent half an hour giving me an ultrasound after the technician spent that long with her ultrasound. She recommended a biopsy for the faint spot she found. The chief radiologist performed my biopsy and found a second lump. Both were Stage 2 Invasive Infiltrating Ductal Carcinoma. After my mastectomy in February 2014, I learned from my pathology report I had five tumors total. Chemo started on April Fool's Day, and I finished my four treatments in June. Losing my hair was a lot harder than I thought it would be.

Cancer taught me a lot about myself. I learned not to sweat the small stuff (it's ALL small stuff!) I learned how to rely on others to help me when I couldn't help myself. My faith grew stronger. I learned how tough I can be.

I really want to help others going through their own cancer journey. I feel that sharing my experience can help others' journeys be less stressful. I want to show them that cancer can be overcome. Last year a cousin of mine went through her own breast cancer journey. Dawn told me I inspired her and gave her hope sharing my story with her. My firsthand knowledge made it easier for her to deal with surgery and chemo. I would love to make the journey easier for others too. I would be honored to be a 2017 Face of Breast Cancer!