

## Shenell Thompson

“In April of 2014, I woke up feeling like I wanted to breast feed a baby (my baby was 15). After a few minutes of normal, breast checking, I squeezed my nipple and a clear substance came out. I made a mental note to call my doctor the next week to follow-up. After being cleared for my normal mammogram, I didn’t think it could be anything serious. My doctor sent me for a diagnostic mammogram and ultrasound. Both revealed a potential papilloma but nothing serious. I was scheduled for a breast excision on 7/16. After a minor procedure, the surgeon told me he didn’t have clear margins and found Atypical Ductal Hyperplasia (pre cancer cells) I went back to surgery on 8/6 and ended up with a lumpectomy. On 8/14 the doctor said, I didn’t expect to find it, but you have cancer...the good kind” it is treatable, it is curable and you will be okay. But it is cancer!

I was diagnosed with Ductal Carcinoma In-Situ (DCIS) which is stage 0, meaning the cancer has not spread beyond the milk ducts. After more testing, I had a double mastectomy with reconstruction. There is a lot of controversy over the treatment/over-treatment of DCIS. I am blessed that I have always been mindful of my breast health and early detection led me to find this very early. I have lost two aunts to breast cancer in the last decade. I have 4 friends battling breast cancer now and I know that with early detection, we can stop losing our loved ones to cancer. I have always been an advocate for early detection. I never believed I would be a part of the story...Good friends and great supports were a blessing to me through this journey. I would be honored to support and share with newly diagnosed women, especially those with early stage cancers, which tend to be pushed aside as not “really” being cancer. The diagnosis changes you...what you do with it is most important.”

