



BREAST CANCER

SURVIVOR



Loving myself
and it feels so
good!



Celebrating Our Ribbons of Survivors 365

A Face of Hope after Cancer

In our May/June 2020 issue of KUOMagazine, I am very honored to share the story of Yvette M. Felder (born American), who's a mother of two boys named Caleb (7 years) and Jacob (4 years). Her family heritage is African and European ancestry. Her mom is from Maine and father here in Orlando, FL. Yvette is the co-owner of Powerline Sounds HD, which re-established in 2001, that is instrumental in our Caribbean community here in Florida. I have known Yvette for over 10 years and even playing mas with her for Orlando/Tampa Carnival. As a 21 years Breast Cancer Survivor, it really hit home when I heard the news that Yvette was diagnose with cancer. In July 2019, Yvette was diagnosed with Stage 4 Triple Positive Metastatic Breast Cancer. For most women with stage 4 breast cancer may be treated mainly with systemic therapy. The treatment may include hormone therapy, chemotherapy, targeted therapy, or some combination of these. Also, surgery or radiation might also be used to help prevent or treat symptoms. Now that Yvette is feeling much better, I was so honored to share her story..... her words... and her journey to survivorship.



KUOM: Yvette, let me first start by asking, how are you feeling these days? Today I feel stronger and more empowered than I have ever felt before after going through breast cancer.

KUOM: I'm so happy you're doing great. When were you first diagnosed, what stage, type of cancer & and how was it initially detected? I was diagnosed in July 2019 with stage 4 triple positive metastatic breast cancer; however, it was to be treated as stage 3c with the full intent to cure since it had not gone to any major organs yet but only to distant lymph nodes. I realized there was something the matter with me when my right breast remained larger than my left one after I had stopped breast feeding my youngest son and the right breast never went back to the normal size. I also started to get a sharp pain in my

right breast, and I noticed my right arm was slightly swollen as well. I made an appointment to have a mammogram that morning and when I went in for the mammogram they immediately did an ultra sound after and then when the doctor came to talk to me he told me that it definitely looked like cancer and that I would need to likely get surgery and biopsy etc.

KUOM: When you received the news and heard these three words "You Have Cancer." What was going through your mind? I had a hard time remembering all the things that were said because I just started to zone out and my entire body began to tremble uncontrollably. I knew then before the biopsy that this was serious based on the doctor's response and how he seemed so sure about it. After the biopsy results came back positive for cancer, I initially became angry and then really sad about the whole thing and remembered thinking of my kids and the fear of dying and what that would mean. I went through many stages of emotions during this time but ultimately came out of that into a place of acceptance and peace and clarity knowing that God would give me the strength to get through this. I prayed often and my faith in Jesus got stronger. Throughout this journey I kept meeting and connecting with so many people from doctors, nurses, other patients etc., and I began to realize that everyone is going through something and that everyone is facing some sort of battle be it an actual cancer of some kind or another or another type of ailment or life altering situation and that life itself is a journey and we have to go through hardships in order to grow sometimes.

KUOM: Tell me a little bit about your treatment process? I have done chemo from August 2019 until December 2019. I had lumpectomy surgery and proton therapy as well as traditional radiation and now I am completing my treatment with a maintenance chemo which will decrease the chances of a recurrence. In the process of treatment, I developed lymphedema which is edema in my right arm and causes it to swell with lymphatic fluid. I have been undergoing physical therapy for this and anticipate having an autograft lymph node transplant surgery soon.

KUOM: Is there a family history of cancer? Yes, cancer does run in my family. My father past away when I was 15 years old, he was 46.

KUOM: How did you find the courage in telling your family, then your friends you have cancer? I ultimately decided to tell all my family and friends and I just did it as candidly as I could I felt like sharing to help to inspire others while at the same time encourage others to take their health seriously and to pay attention to their bodies.

KUOM: Would you say your perspective on life has changed emotionally, socially, and spiritually? This process has made me realize how fragile life is and how things can change in an instance. To value the things that are most important and to also put my trust and faith in God because without my faith I feel like this ordeal would have consumed me.

KUOM: When it comes to your family & friends, did you notice your cancer affected the people around you? I noticed that so many people distanced themselves from me completely as maybe they just didn't know what to say or do. while some others wanted only to check up on me often. I realized that at times I found myself consoling other people that would be upset over my diagnosis. I realized that everyone is different and that not to internalize anybody's reactions towards my diagnosis or lack thereof.

KUOM: Though you may have never faced a threat like cancer, you undoubtedly had to deal with some setbacks and difficulties. What type of support system did you have and personal coping style (counseling, support groups, journaling, etc.?) I went to a few support group activities through Orlando Health as well as found support in my Bible Study Group (Bible Study Fellowship - BSF) an international Bible study group as well as at church and my friends and some of my family offered support and that has been truly a blessing. I started a video blog on Youtube as well as shared some of my journey through my social media and that has been very therapeutic in the process.

KUOM: Tell me about your treatment process and how your daily routine has change to accommodate for your cancer? I have done chemo from Aug. 2019 until Dec. 2019 lumpectomy surgery and proton therapy as well as traditional radiation and now I am completing my treatment with a maintenance chemo which will decrease the chances of a recurrence. In the process of treatment, I developed lymphedema which is edema in my right arm and causes it to swell with lymphatic fluid. I have been undergoing physical therapy for this and anticipate having an autograft lymph node transplant surgery soon.

KUOM: What are 3 take always you've learned about yourself that would help someone who's diagnosed with cancer? (1) I would tell anyone going through this ordeal that they should do whatever they need to do to survive and to not worry about the superficial things like losing their hair, or breasts etc. but to focus on the end results which is getting well and to do the things that make them happy and to focus on taking care of themselves. (2) I've learned that I am a lot stronger than I thought I was and that sometimes being strong is the only option because surviving this thing is vital for my future and for my children's future. (3) I've embraced the new me. The short hair, the new outlook, the stronger connection with God and the appreciation for life that I never knew before this whole ordeal.

KUOM: How is this year's Mother's Day compared to all the others? And do your kids understand about COVID-19? My kids understand about COVID-19 well. Caleb is very intellectual and tested as gifted so he can comprehend a lot of mature context. Jacob understands limited because he is a but younger but anytime someone coughs now, he says the Corona virus. So, idk he seems to be picking up an understanding himself. Lol

On behalf of KUOMagazine, I would like to thank Yvette M. Felder for sharing her story and being a warrior by keeping the Faith, staying strong and continuing to be our Ribbons of Survivors 365." KUOMagazine will continue to keep in contact with Yvette and share her progress. Our KUOMagazine Team are all wishing her many blessings on her new journey of being a survivor. Yvette would like to thank Sparkling Deva Photography, for her beautiful photos. Follow on Facebook at Sparkling Deva Photography and on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/sparklingdevaphotography>. You can stay connected with Yvette on Facebook @YvetteMargotFelder and Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/yvemargo>



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