

# KUOM Magazine.com

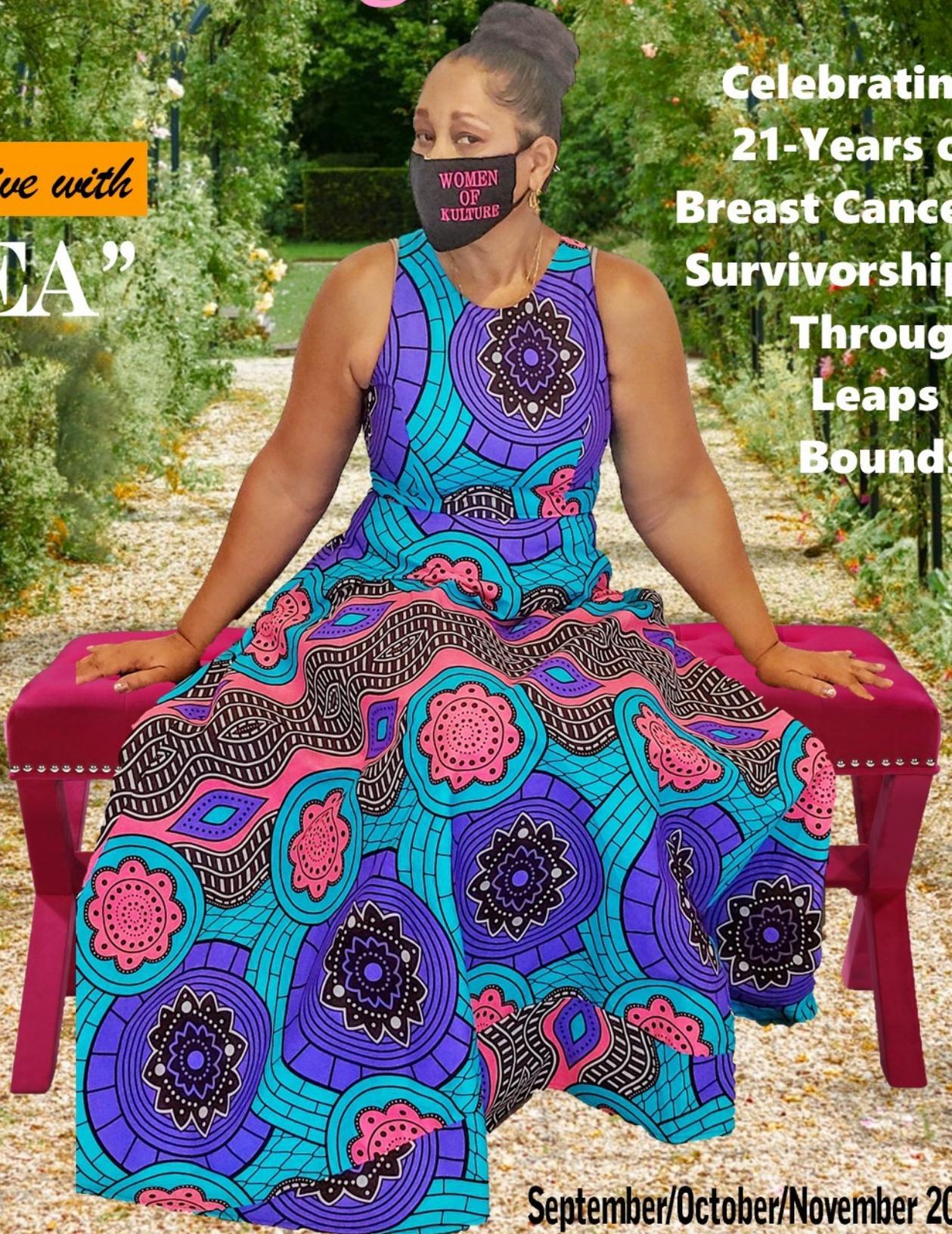
Men & Women of Kulture 365

Greater Level of Wellness (G.L.O.W.)

*Exclusive with*

**”MEA”**

**Celebrating  
21-Years of  
Breast Cancer  
Survivorship  
Through  
Leaps &  
Bounds!**



**September/October/November 2020**



Celebrating Our Ribbons of Survivors 365

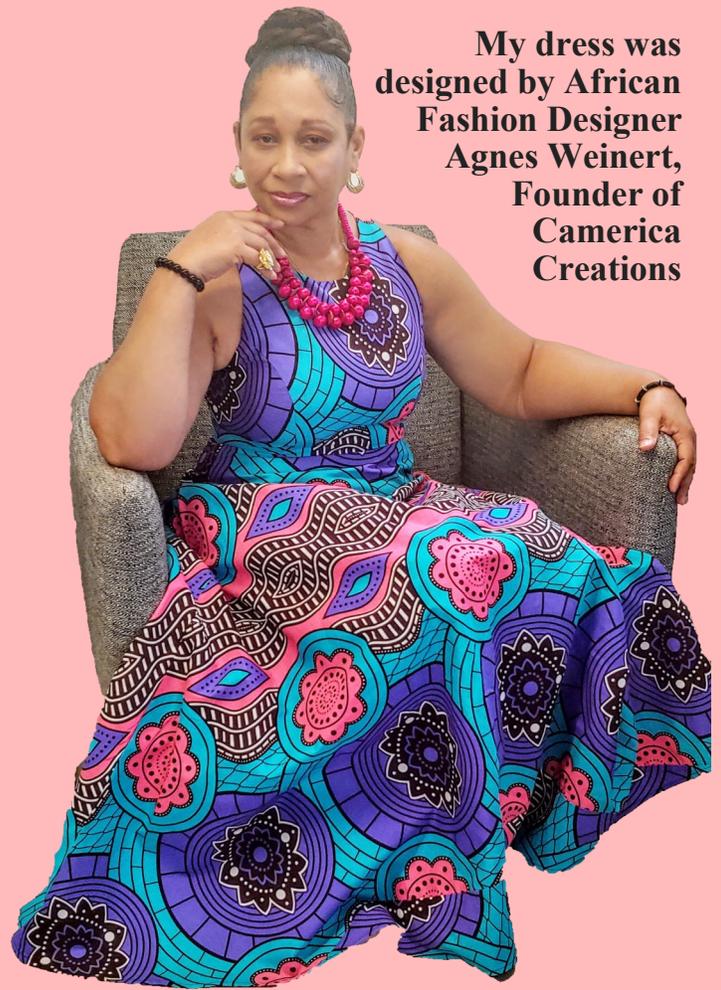
## Embracing Her Survivorship Through Leaps & Bounds!

*Michelle "Lady Mea" Allman" (born Jamaican), KUOMagazine's Founder/Editor-In-Chief, Men & Women of Kulture 365 and Ribbons of Survivors 365. Mea shares an up close and personal story of a strong, fearless, and an amazing woman that has overcome leaps and bounds of Breast Cancer, Domestic Violence and Bullying. So, sit back and get a snack for this exclusive story of such an amazing, Caribbean woman that doesn't let anything, or anyone stop her from achieving her goals.*

**KUOM: Let's go back 21 years ago from when you were diagnosed with Breast Cancer. Can you share your experience of being missed diagnosed when your cancer was initially detected? How did you react to hearing the news and what stage were you diagnosed?** In 1999, I was diagnosed with endometriosis and after several attempts of surgery/treatments to correct the problem, I made the decision to have a full hysterectomy. I was experiencing hot flashes and started taking hormone's (estrogen & progesterone). Six months later I developed a lump in my left underarm. My primary doctor said it probably was a swollen lymph node from using deodorant that might have caused the irritation. Even though I stop using deodorant, the lump did not go away for two weeks. I returned back to my doctor and a mammogram was scheduled, because I also felt a lump in my breast. The mammogram came back with no evidence that suggested anything was wrong. Something in my gut was telling me something was wrong. My previous boss had mentioned if your gut is telling you something is wrong. Then 9 times out of 10, something may be wrong. So, he gave me the number to his surgeon to schedule an appointment.

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The surgeon looked at my mammogram films and didn't see any indication to be alarmed other than the lump in my breast. He scheduled a biopsy just to make sure, which came back positive for cancer. Hearing the words of being "You Have Breast Cancer," was frightening, and overwhelming. In my mind I thought this was my death sentence. Then next thought in my mind was Ok, Mea it's time to regroup. I then asked my doctor for a moment alone as I look up in the ceiling to say, Lord, we need to have a serious talk. I don't come to you as often as I should, but this was not the discussion we had about my journey I'm not prepared to take right now. My life was just staring, and my kids were still too young to understand what mommy is going through or losing their mom. I then look at the doctor and ask, am I going to die and how much time do I have. He looked at me with a serious look and said we won't know how bad until we do surgery. So, let's not get ahead of ourselves or think the worse. Together we will get through this, and please don't worry. What use to be beautiful dreams at night, became an ongoing nightmare of voices "***You have Breast Cancer***" repeatedly. I was beginning to wonder if this broken record would stop playing in my head. After my surgery, I was told what cause my cancer to progress so fast after my hysterectomy was the fact I took hormone's (estrogen & progesterone), because I had Hormone Receptor-Positive Breast Cancer (PR-Positive). I was diagnosed with stage II Breast Cancer and my tumor had hormone receptors.



My dress was designed by African Fashion Designer Agnes Weinert, Founder of Camerica Creations

**Note:** Most breast cancers -- That means the cancer cells grow in response to the hormone estrogen. About 65% of these are also "PR-positive." They grow in response to another hormone, progesterone. If your breast cancer has a significant number of receptors for either estrogen or progesterone, it's considered hormone-receptor positive.

Source: <https://www.cancer.org/search.html?q=Hormone+Receptor-Positive+Breast+Cancer+>

**KUOM: Is there a family history of cancer?** OMG.....Lord yes, my oldest sister had Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma cancer, and four of my aunts had Breast & Stomach cancer and other relatives with Leukemia, Lung Cancer. Whom all lost their battle to cancer.

**KUOM: What type of surgery/cancer treatments did you received?** I had a left radical mastectomy on the left side and a lumpectomy on the right side, followed by chemo and radiation therapy. A year after my treatments I had reconstructive breast surgery.

**KUOM: What are some things that helped ease your chemo side effects? After your side effects from chemo, were there any other illnesses you experienced?** I was extremely sick during chemo treatments that I could not eat anything and lost a lot of weight. My mom bought a juicer and would juice (carrots, celery, beets all together), as well as smoothies with ensure, fruits, ice cream and add protein powder. She would give me nutmeg to place in my mount that would help me from being so nauseous. My mom would also brew some ginger tea. As for illnesses I've experienced, that would be a year later after my first mammogram, which lead to a chronic illness today called Lymphedema with Cellulitis (*it is a sudden, non-contagious infection of the skin, characterized by redness, swelling and heat accompanied by pain and tenderness and high fever*). I have been battling this for the past 21 years, which caused ongoing infections in my left arm, and resulting a in 3-4

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# BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Bringing Awareness & Sharing Stories of Warriors!

[RibbonsOfSurvivors.com](http://RibbonsOfSurvivors.com)



days of hospitalization with intravenous antibiotics. But, in the last year in and half, it has gotten better because I started to notice after drinking a home remedy I would brew together of fresh lemon sliced, garlic, ginger, lemongrass and sliced oranges) in a big pot and boil for 10-15 minutes and drink twice a day (morning & before bedtime) to help build up my Immune system. I found that the beneficial combination helped my Lymphatic system, but I continued to take precautions in staying away from anyone who maybe under the weather, because of my Autoimmune Disorder. Other health conditions That I have endured were Anemia, Autoimmune Disorder, Degenerative Disc Disease DDD (L5-S1), Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease, Chronic Fibromyalgia, Chronic Insomnia, Hypokalemia (low potassium), Hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid), Osteoporosis (knee), Rheumatoid Arthritis, Restless Leg Syndrome. Regardless of these conditions, I continue to remain positive and maintain my daily routine, with a healthier mindset approach. I also have a port in my upper right side of my chest, because I don't have good veins in my right arm and my left arm is off limits, because of the lymphedema. (photo credit Mea Allman)



Source: <https://www.lymphoedema.org/cellulitis/about-cellulitis>

**KUOM: What's the biggest challenge you faced in order to heal, and what did you do to meet the challenge.** Honestly, I felt like damage goods after having surgery...For about 6-months I wouldn't look in the mirror, because I didn't wanted to see my bald head or having just one breast. I felt very ashamed and less of a woman and especially hated the women I saw as if it was someone else. This is something most women often feel having breast cancer. My surgeon's nurse helped me to cope by saying; once you have the courage to stand in front of the mirror naked and don't move until you accept the person you see that's looking back at you. Remember, regardless of what body part or hair you've lost, you were born a woman and you are still a woman. You're also alive and no longer have cancer and isn't that something to be happy about. So, finally I took her advised and took a good look at myself in seeing I'm still beautiful, strong amazing woman I've always been. I would also put up positive sticky notes on my bathroom mirror to remind me each day how beautiful I am. I have them in a book, which I read time from time positive affirmations, because of those moments when I need a quick pick me up.

### **THE BIRTH OF YOUR MAGAZINE:**

**KUOM: Now moving forward to 2007 after having Breast Cancer, you created Karibbean Under One Magazine—KUOMagazine.com. What inspired you to create this magazine? How did you come up with the name?** It was after being a part of the Orlando Carnival Association, when asking a few individuals a little about their culture. I realized by their response that many who wore their clothing to represent their island/country, wasn't knowledgeable what the colors in the flag stood for or the national symbols. So, I thought to myself how can I bring more awareness and educate on the many cultures we have within my community & worldwide. So, I created KUOMagazine with that mission and vision. As for the name, I remember brainstorming with a good friend of mine Henry, and I was telling him I needed a name for my magazine, but I wanted it to represent many cultures under one umbrella. He kept saying repeat what you just said, but leave out the words (**cultures & to be & umbrella**), and there's the name of your magazine. So, the birth of Karibbean Under One Magazine was born. For those that don't know me, my trademark is always spelling my C's with K. {Laughing}. To the left is my first printed copy of KUOMagazine.



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**KUOM: You took 4 years off from 2010 in publishing KUOMagazine to continue your health-related illnesses from your Breast Cancer. How did you find the strength to break through some of the negative thoughts you had about feeling less of a woman and start to love yourself as a whole person again?** George Bernard Shaw once quoted, *“life isn’t about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.”* I was dealing with being in and out of the hospital, feeling depressed, and just trying to heal as a whole in loving myself from head to foot. It just seemed as if my life was so consumed with doctors and hospitals. When you’re dealing with depression, these five S’s....**Self-Acceptance, Self-Awareness, Self-Conscious, Self-Esteem and Self-Worth**, which truly effects our mind, body, and spirit from functioning daily. I started therapy and became conscious of those feelings and how it was affecting me. I was able to start loving and creating a better Mea from within. We first have to get to the root of the problem to move forward to heal and not sweep it under the rug, because it will eventually eat you up inside and lead to suicide or more health issues.

### **RIBBONS OF SURVIVORS 365:**

**KUOM: Mea you are truly a survivor and a warrior. Most people would quit their jobs or businesses but, now you created Ribbons of Survivors 365. What kept you motivated to say there's more work to do other than KUOMagazine?** {Laugh} Being a 21-year Breast Cancer Survivor, I found it very helpful and therapeutic to share my story, and what I experienced. I wanted to become an advocate to help others like myself. I would give my time to help them both physically, mentally, and emotionally. I consider this my way of giving back to my cancer, chronic illness/conditions community and my brothers and sisters that are survivors. As you may noticed each of my brand names always have the number (365), because I celebrate life 365 and I love honoring survivors so that they can get back their voice, hear the most touching stories of other survivors and warriors that are still fighting their battle with ongoing illnesses. They are all my Ribbons of Survivors 365 who stand in their **FAITH**, in their **TRUTH**, in their **KULTURE**, and in all that they do 365! **HEAR THEM ROAR!!**

**KUOM: Based on your experience, what's the profile of a woman who is able to survive and thrive in spite of breast Cancer?** Surviving cancer is anything but easy. But, through my own breast cancer battles, those who are impacted by cancer, the word means many things to many people. Not sure if there’s a certain profile, but what I can say is that **SURVIVING is the first key. We have a strength like no other to fighter this battle** of cancer, even on days when we are weak. Life is something precious, so we have to find something to focus on to find us strength. My focus was on my children, because I knew they needed their mom and I couldn’t bear to leave them at that young age. Now, speaking of **STRIVING**, that’s when we become true warriors on a mission to survive. As a cancer survivor everything is a battle from keeping a positive mindset to educating ourselves on ways to stay healthy. We no longer allow cancer to determine how we live our lives to achieve our goals. So, I guess the profile would be combining Surviving & Striving as our power source, and not let cancer be our kryptonite {Laughing}.



**KUOM: What advice would you offer someone who has been diagnosed/battling cancer?** Definitely do your research about the type of cancer you have, because these are questions you’ll need to ask your doctor. I can’t stress enough about **“Self-Care,”** because it’s so important when it comes to your skin, eating a nutritional diet in building your immune system to prevent infections. I would also recommend seeing a nutritionist who specializes with cancer patients, because a healthy diet helps your body function at its best. It also helps you to keep up your strength, energy level and your defenses against infections. A healthy diet can also prevent body tissue from breaking down and build new tissues. Find a support group as a way to cope with what you are feeling and try to keep a positive circle of family/friends to help you stay positive during your treatment. Most important, don’t ever give up on those bad days, because it shall pass, and you’ll rise from it. I am a testimony that, there is a wonderful and an amazing life after cancer.

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# KUOMagazine's Ribbons of Survivors 365



# STOP

# DOMESTIC ABUSE

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KUOMagazine's Ribbons of Survivors is dedicated to bring awareness and to share stories of our Domestic Violence Survivors #SilenceNoMore

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[www.RibbonsOfSurvivors.com](http://www.RibbonsOfSurvivors.com)  
[www.KUOMagazine.com](http://www.KUOMagazine.com)

**KUOM: You created Ribbons of Survivors 365, why now Men & Women of Kulture and why were you bullied?** {A funny story} Years ago, I was given the name Brain, because of this cartoon show called “Binky & The Brain. Brain was the one that was always looking to take over the world {Laughing}. So, here I go again in 2016, my next take over was Women of Kulture. I was discriminated because of my culture and bullied in school by kids that didn’t understand this mixed Caribbean/Canadian girl. I was constantly bullied because of my cultural (Jamaican/Canadian accent). Everyday they teased me saying “what’s your ethnic background, because you’re not black or white, and why do you speak like that.” The list just went on and on, which lead me to cry and doubt who my mom raised me to be in being proud of my culture and love who I am. Later in years I experienced the same situation working around a non Caribbean environment. By attending cultural events I ask a few women if they experienced what I did, and the answer was yes. They would shun



away from speaking with their accent, because of the constant questions about their culture and was treated differently. My mission and vision of “Men & Women of Kulture was to celebrate various cultures and the positive things they were doing within their community, by sharing their accomplishments, and personal stories of battles/obstacles they’ve overcome. In 2018, I shifted to rebranding to Women of Kulture 365, because like me I celebrate my culture every day of the year. I also host an Annual “Kings & Queens Edition” Men & Women Empowerment Luncheon,” to honor 6-8 men & women from various cultures, while enjoying a delicious lunch with their family and friends. This truly becomes a Brotherhood & Sisterhood affair. This year I will officially launch my Young Men & Women of Kulture 365 to celebrate the positive things our youths are doing in their community and in school. I also do an empowerment luncheon for my Ribbons of Survivors 365 as well.

**KUOM: What's the one piece of advice that you learned from your parents or any adult influence that you still use to this very day?** My late mother always raised me to be proud of who I am, where I came from. And would also say; “anything your mind can conceive, you will achieve.” The word “can’t” is never a part of my vocabulary. But, more of all be true to yourself and others.

**KUOM: You are also a survivor of Domestic Violence and how did you recover from that experience?** I was in a relationship with someone who was abusive. But, I had the strength to make the final decision to walk away and leave that relationship permanently. I guess the values my mother instilled in me to be independent and strong, truly gave me the courage and strength and realized this type of relations was not healthy. There are 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men who will experience severe physical violence and 1 in 10 women in the United States will be raped by an intimate partner in their lifetime. This is a topic that needs to be address and bring awareness, not just in the month of October, but 365. As part of my Ribbons of Survivors 365, I am dedicated to share these stories of survivors and remember the ones we’ve lost. Often times we are standing or sitting among those who are victims and can’t walk away for whatever reason. My prayers go out to all of them and that there will be “**NO MORE SILENCE.**” The Statistics about Domestic Violence. On average, nearly **20 people per minute** are victims of physical violence by an intimate partner in the United States. During one year, this equates to more than 10 million women and men. **1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men** have experienced [some form of] physical violence by an intimate partner within their lifetime.

**KUOM: If you had an opportunity today, what would you say to your younger self?** {Laughing} I would say; Self, no matter what obstacles or storms that blows your way or causes you pain, two words to remember is “**Forgive**” & “**Thank you.**” Those are life lessons of people who might hurt you for whatever reason that you’ll discover many gifts within yourself to be better than you were and bounce back a stronger person. So, forgive them and thank them, because many blessings will come to you 10 folds over. Trust me I know, lol.

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KUOMagazine's Ribbons of Survivors 365

DON'T MAKE PEOPLE SAD.  
**STOP AND  
THINK,  
WORDS CAN  
HURT.**



**TAKE A STAND TOGETHER!**



The Victim Service Center  
provides 24/7 Helpline at  
(407) 500-HEAL (4325)

KUOMagazine's Ribbons of Survivors 365 is dedicated in bringing awareness and to share stories of those who have been #Bullied. We have also partnered with AMRAK. Visit us at [www.RibbonsOfSurvivors.com](http://www.RibbonsOfSurvivors.com)



**BULLIES = BUL-LIES**

Visit online at [www.AmrakAntiBully.org](http://www.AmrakAntiBully.org)

**KUOM: What's the next chapter for Mea or Lady Brain, lol?** {laugh}, you got jokes. Well for one I have accomplished my Certification as a Professional Life Coach, and I just completed my certification of a Health & Nutrition Life Coach to enhance my advocacy with my brands. I am looking forward to when this pandemic is over to travel in being a worldwide Motivational Speaking and a Health Advocate. I would like to finish writing my book in 2021, and to become a best-selling author, for now {LOL}. My brain is always coming up with something, so you will just have to keep reading KUOMagazine or follow me on my social media to see more to come of Lady Mea/The Brain!

**KUOM: Today, what have you learned about yourself that you were not conscious of before getting Cancer?** I come to realize my purpose in life is to be a Health Advocate, and Life Coach, which I have been doing for many years ago before getting my certifications. I believe that if never had cancer my path would totally be different. Sharing my story of battling this disease has been therapeutic and healing for me. I embrace my survivorship of breast cancer; because I'm assisting others that are going through challenges in life by helping to coach and educate them of the various cancer, chronic illnesses/conditions to cope physically, mentally, and emotionally in their daily lives. Help them to know their options and guiding them to a renewed life's journey of happiness. I truly believe we are our own health advocate; it's our body and we have to protect it as much as possible. My #1 Rule for me, is getting yearly checkups, educating myself, changing my eating habits, exercising as often as I can, and most of all, having Faith and a Positive mindset. Remember, cancer chooses us, but we embrace the journey and fight back stronger.

**Bonus: Describe Mea Allman in three words?** Authentic, Integrity & Selflessness

**KUOM: Do you have any final words you would like to share?** Yes, please keep in mind that each women responds to hearing you have Cancer differently. It brings their life to a different pattern, which he/she will have to redesign how their new journey will become. A few tips for early prevention is that knowledge is power to live longer and healthy. Remember, get your annual mammogram and do self-examination at home. Studies have shown that if you're 20-39 years old or 40 or older. All women can get breast cancer. Many breast cancers can be treated successfully, but the chances for success in treatment are highest when cancers are found early. We may not know how to prevent your chance of having cancer, but we do know how to find it earlier when the chance for this treatment is the greatest. Find ways to embrace your survivorship after cancer, by just start living, and do the things you've always wanted to do and worry less. Giving yourself the mental & physical makeover (self-care). Most of all be good to yourself and love all their flaws, because you are a perfect creation of GOD. My mom always says, "Prevention is better than cure." Love the body you're in and take good care of it like your it's your best friend.



Special thank you to everyone who made this issue a very special issue for me. If you would like to share your story, please feel free to contact me at email [iamkuomagazine@gmail.com](mailto:iamkuomagazine@gmail.com). Stay connected with me on my following links below.

Written Collaboration by Dr. Donald Tate, Koogie, Lenny Burg, Ria Mali, Ronyai Hawkins, Sandi Morais

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# KARIBBEAN



UNDER ONE MAGAZINE



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