

Get to Know Our...

2012 Beneficiaries



Linda Nelson

Linda is a daughter, sister, friend, wife and busy mom with two young children. She is also battling Stage IV breast cancer. Just prior to her annual mammogram, Linda found a lump in her breast. Following a biopsy that showed an aggressing tumor, Linda underwent a bilateral mastectomy. More tests revealed the cancer had spread to her liver, lymph nodes and hipbone. "I never even felt sick" Linda recalls when she heard the shocking news that she had Stage IV breast cancer. At the young age of 48, it was truly hard to believe. Linda's diagnosis of triple negative breast cancer comprises about 10% of all breast cancer cases. Unlike many types of breast cancer, this particular kind does not respond to hormonal treatment. Scientists have only begun to study this in the last six years and they are just beginning to really learn about it. It is extremely aggressive and has an overall poor prognosis. Linda completed 8 months of chemotherapy in June 2011 and was in full remission, but scans taken only 3 months later revealed a relapse. Then cancer had returned to her liver, lymph nodes and possibly a vertebra in the spine. Linda was devastated to hear the news, but she is currently participating in a clinical trial at the City of Hope. The new drug being tested is still in its early phases but has shown promise in extending triple negative patient remissions. She is very hopeful about her future and maintains a positive outlook on life.

Linda's wish is to return to Yosemite - the site where her and her husband of 20 year, Mitch, spent their honeymoon. Their plan has always been to return to Yosemite with their 2 beautiful daughters to experience Linda's "happy spot" as a family. "I would love to see the looks on their faces as they take it all in".

In June 2007, when Bethany was 6 years old, she was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL). This is supposed to be the most common and treatable of all childhood leukemias. Her treatment proceeded with chemotherapy and radiation with no problems until June 2009 when Bethany complained of vision problems in her right eye. It turned out that she was completely blind in that eye. After having a CT, MRI, and a visit to the retina specialist, it was decided that Bethany had relapsed and her cancer had returned to in her optic nerve. Her second relapse came in 2010 when Bethany's head began to swell. A biopsy was ordered and the result was cancer. She again began chemotherapy and radiation. The doctors decided that a bone marrow transplant was her best option. Prior to transplant, her body had full blown radiation to kill off her own bone marrow cells. In 2011 Bethany received a successful bone marrow transplant. She developed Graft vs. Host Disease & viral infections which resulted in her weakened immune system. Later in 2011 Bethany ended up back in the hospital for 3 weeks due to the possibility of an intestinal rupture. She was home for only 10 days before she had to go back to the hospital due to pericardial effusion (fluid around the heart). The doctors attempted to drain the fluid, but there were complications, which resulted in additional fluid building up around her lungs, and the collapse of one of her lungs. She ended up staying in the ICU for 12 more days because of this.

Bethany Monson



Bethany has medical insurance, but it does not cover the cost of perscription drugs, which are currently running in the thousands each month. Her father died in a car accident when she was 2 years old. Her mother stays home full time to take care of Bethany and her brother.