

Co-Survivor Sibs and All



The girls decided to walk in a 5K for breast cancer. A great women's cause, a beautiful morning out, and for a nice reward, lunch out together. We didn't know that only a few days later the decision to do something fun and worthwhile would become so much more. Days after registering for the Race, Nan was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Growing up in a big family gives you experience in sharing and caring for each other. The five sisters have always spent a lot of time together and would go away for a long weekend every fall to laugh and shop and have fun - just us girls. So it's natural that we decided that we all would go through this together - all of us in the family. Of course! - no question about it. Because we all knew that she would be the first one there if the situation were reversed.

We - all of us siblings and sibs-in-law - are scared and worried, but know that together we can navigate the journey of breast cancer with Nan. Since she had never been married or had children, we would be her main support system. We're there for the chemo, there for the radiation; when she is down, we are there to hold her up and help her move forward. And we're there for those long nights of worry and tears. Hers and ours.

You see Nan was our co-survivor, as much as we were hers. She was there for us when we were down, telling a joke or story that would hold us up and help us move forward. When we worried and cried, Nan was ready with her wry sense of the absurd that put into perspective the crummy stuff of cancer.

When her cancer returned, there we were again, a family battling cancer. More chemo and radiation, more tears. And more fun mixed in with the crummy stuff - a Christmas Hat parade at our annual family Christmas party so Nan's bald head wouldn't be such a beacon. Christmas tree hats, snowman hats, advent wreath hats, Christmas candle hats - all hand-made and ridiculously funny. Oh what fun we had that Christmas!

And we had a new focus - Nan said, "Let's form a team for the Race this year - we have such a big family and extended family, we'll be the biggest family team there!" So we recruited and cajoled over 175 family members, coworkers and friends to join us, hoping to be the biggest family team.

And we were. But without Nan - she died a month before the Race that year. Well, without Nan physically, but she sure was there every step of the way. That year and every year since.

So we keep walking for Nan and with Nan. We walk for all those other families who have travelled the road of breast cancer together. And we walk so future families won't have to make that journey.

We are Nan's Fans

