

HopeLine

connecting you to a network of support

Mission Statement

Hope for Two... The Pregnant with Cancer Network is an organization dedicated to providing women diagnosed with cancer while pregnant with information, support and hope.

Guiding Values

We serve women of all socioeconomic, ethnic and religious backgrounds worldwide. Volunteers with a history of cancer while pregnant are the mainstays of our support network. We strive to remove barriers to women obtaining complete and accurate information about their options for dealing with cancer while pregnant. We respect and support every woman's personal decisions without judgement.



Hope for two
the pregnant with cancer network

Message from the Chairwoman

Patty Murray...

"What if" - Our invisible thief

ALL of our negative "What if..." thoughts are personal thieves, stealing our peace of mind and ability to live in and enjoy the present. You know them on an intimate level. Thoughts such as, "What if I can't take my next chemo session if my white blood cell count is too low?"; "What if my teenage child gets lost and gets into a car accident?"; "What if my company is downsized, and I lose my job?"; "What if my cancer comes back?"; "What if I do not heal?"; or, the ultimate thief, "What if I'm not here anymore- what will happen to my loved ones?" I use the word "negative" because we generally don't obsess over the positive thoughts such as, "What if I win the lottery?", or "What if I kick the butt out of this disease?" The positive ones are not problematic. They would be welcome visitors to our psyche. Perversely, however, our mind appears to be so singularly drawn to the negative like a magnet.

Therefore, a strategy must be formulated to combat those thoughts that rob our peace of mind. If we don't, we can become figuratively and literally *paralyzed by fear*. It begins with mental stagnation when all you can concentrate on is the "what if" scenario. This obsession rewires your brain causing a mental fog in which you become unproductive; a feeling of "paralysis" sets in. Each one of us will have to personalize our plan of attack since we are all, as my daughter likes to say, "special snowflakes."

First, we must be reminded that, as human beings, we possess free will and the ability to think intelligently. When these negative thoughts appear, realize that we put them there, consciously or not. That same YOU that placed them at the forefront of your mind can eliminate them. Use the mental imagery that works for you-whether it be an image of Pac Man gobbling up all the negativity or a strong wind gust which effectively forces the "what ifs" out of your mind.

However, old habits die hard and we must continually guard against returning to our negative fixations. The most effective defense is replacing our destructive musings with positive thoughts. For instance, replace, "What if my cancer metastasizes," with "I am cancer free now and am going to enjoy my life with my family until my next medical appointment."

Then substitute every other negative "what if" with a positive affirmation. If you don't, your entire life may be defined by misery. Why would you do that to yourself if you possess the ability to positively change your outlook?

See "**CHAIRWOMAN'S MESSAGE**" continued on page 3.



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my story **By Nicole F.**

real stories of women diagnosed with cancer during pregnancy

I contacted *Hope for Two* back in November of 2015 about finding a support person to talk to through my cancer journey. At that time I was given an amazing support person that shared her story and advice with me which gave me confidence moving forward in treatment during my pregnancy. Now I want to share my story in hopes to inspire and comfort others that are going through the same thing.

My cancer story actually began one year prior to being diagnosed when I found a lump. I was told it was a cyst and they would monitor it periodically for one year. At the first follow up it did not grow. At the second follow up it was 4mm bigger. The doctor told me that it was most likely still a cyst, but I could have it biopsied if I wanted. I chose to have it biopsied because I thought I may be pregnant and I wanted to make sure it was not cancer. But in November of 2015, I received a phone call that I could never imagine. I was told I had breast cancer. At that time my husband and I were trying to have another baby (we currently have an older son). So I requested a blood pregnancy test to make sure I was not pregnant in order to schedule an MRI. The result: I was four weeks pregnant with our second baby.

I immediately contacted a local well-known breast cancer center and was set up with a surgeon to discuss options. I was beyond happy to hear that although abortion was an option, she was confident that I could be treated while being pregnant. After making sure my life was not at risk, I chose to be treated during pregnancy. I received a lumpectomy in January 2016 which showed my breast cancer to be stage 2 invasive ductal carcinoma. The pathology from my lumpectomy also showed it to be triple negative. But the good news-my lymph node biopsy was clear.

After surgery I received eight rounds of chemotherapy which finished at the end of May. I then delivered a beautiful baby boy at 39 weeks in July of 2016. Alexander Heath was 6 pounds 14 ounces and perfectly healthy. He is now

“ALTHOUGH I WISH I DIDN’T HAVE TO GO THROUGH THIS DURING PREGNANCY, WE’RE SO THANKFUL TO HAVE ALEX. IF I WASN’T PREGNANT AT THE TIME, I MAY HAVE NEVER HAD THE SECOND CHILD WE’VE BEEN WANTING...”

smiling, and growing like a weed!

Since I was only 33 at the time, soon after my diagnosis I was genetically tested, and was found to be positive for the BRCA1 gene. This was also very shocking as I have very little family history of breast or ovarian cancer. Because of this gene I plan to have a double mastectomy and a hysterectomy in the near future in hopes to prevent any cancer from returning. Although

I wish I didn’t have to go through this during pregnancy, we’re so thankful to have Alex. If I wasn’t pregnant at the time, I may have never had the second child we’ve been wanting because of the possible fertility side effects of chemotherapy. ☺

Would you like to share the story of your pregnant with cancer journey?

Contact us: info@hopefortwo.org.

Read more inspirational stories by Hope for Two members on our website: www.hopefortwo.org/survivor_stories.php

Alexander Heath, 6 lbs. 14 oz.



Nicole with son, Alexander.



Hope for Two announces two new members to Board of Directors

We are pleased to announce two new members to our Board of Directors—Lynda Beaupin, MD, Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at Roswell Park Cancer Institute and Woman and Children’s Hospital of Buffalo; and Shannon M. O’Brien, ANP-BC (Adult Nurse Practitioner-Board Certified) who works for a local cardio-thoracic surgeon in the Catholic Health System, Buffalo, NY. We welcome their passion and expertise to our team of highly committed Board members. ❧



Hope for Two member Simone Meade-Holt’s son, Chaz.

Matching Gifts

Did you know that many companies match donations made by their employees to our organization? Ask your Human Resources department today if your employer participates in making your gift have twice the impact.

Every donation we receive is significant in funding our mission to assist women facing the challenge of a cancer diagnosis in pregnancy. Doubling your gift means our efforts go further! ❧

New Resource Guide From Living Beyond Breast Cancer

To support the more than 1,000 women per year in the U.S. who are pregnant and have breast cancer at the same time, Living Beyond Breast Cancer has published a new brochure: *Breast Cancer InFocus: Breast Cancer During Pregnancy*. Women who have experienced breast cancer during pregnancy contributed their stories and photos to this publication. Visit LBBC.ORG to view the guide and order a free copy. ❧

If you are receiving our newsletter by mail and wish to receive it electronically, or to unsubscribe, please contact us at info@hopefortwo.org.

chairwoman’s message continued...

That is insanity! It is worth emphasizing, once again, that this alleged hell-hole that we are living in is a creation of our mind. As such, once we rid ourselves of these negative mental constructions, we are free to enjoy the beautiful lives that we have been given. Dig yourself out and see the sheer wonder of life. Take a walk in the crisp fall air; breathe it in as if for the very first time. Go outdoors just as the sun is setting and be awed by the golden hue the sun casts over the bronze and russet autumn trees.

Until next time, let’s banish *our invisible* “what if” thieves so that we can live in peace and truly appreciate how fortunate we are to be alive. ❧

testimonial

“Awesome. Thanks so much. This is an unbelievable resource and I hope I can be in a position to give back to it one day.”

- AMANDA S., MASSACHUSETTS

Hope for Two's

“Rocking with Hope for Two” Fundraiser

Celebrating 20 Years

Please mark your calendar for Thursday, April 27, 2017. We are celebrating our 20-year anniversary! We are thrilled to announce that, once again, we will have an evening of entertainment by the Michael Bly Band and Mari McNeil Jazz as well as delicious food and drinks at Asbury Hall in Buffalo, New York, as we raise funds to benefit our mission of supporting those who face the challenging diagnosis of cancer in pregnancy. Additional details will follow on our website at www.hopefortwo.org as they become available. Please plan on joining us for this fun and entertaining event! ✨

Special Deliveries

b a b i e s b o r n t o m o t h e r s

w h o w e r e p r e g n a n t w i t h c a n c e r

✨ ANNA SZKALINSKA gave birth to JULIA in November 2014 (3.75 KG.)

✨ APRIL TROY gave birth to NOAH PATRICK in December 2015 (7 LBS.)

✨ CARRIE BOOS gave birth to ELLE VICTORIA in August 2015 (5 LBS. 15 OZ.)

✨ ELIZABETH HOLLIMON gave birth to OLIVER REED in January 2016 (6 LBS. 14 OZ.)

✨ NICOLE F. gave birth to ALEXANDER HEATH in July 2016 (6 LBS. 14 OZ.)



*tell us about
your little miracle
info@hopefortwo.org*

t e s t i m o n i a l

“*As I got your last email...saying that you found a support woman for me I was really touched. It is so important for me to know that there are some positive endings of diagnosis similar to mine. I can't wait to be contacted by [my supporter] April.*”

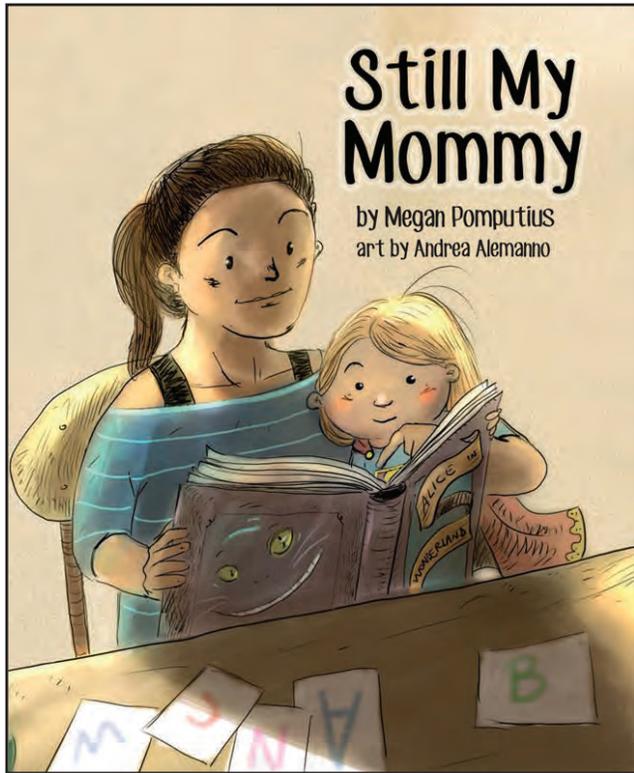
- KASIA S., IRELAND



Hope for Two member Anna Szkalinska with daughter, Julia.

Still My Mommy

BY MEGAN POMPUTIUS



“Still My Mommy is the story of a little girl whose brave mommy is fighting cancer. Fighting cancer makes her mommy look a little different so she wonders if her mommy will still be the same.”

In 2013, Megan Pomputius received an ovarian cancer diagnosis while raising her two year old daughter. Her diagnosis and treatment led to many questions from her child, motivating Megan to write a children’s book to help other mothers and families facing similar circumstances. Written from the child’s point of view, *Still My Mommy* is a helpful resource for families to assist young children in understanding that even though many physical changes may occur during a mother’s illness and treatment, she remains the same person. An easy read, reassuringly addressing common concerns faced by many families coping with this experience. Thoughtfully illustrated by Andrea Alemanno.

Still My Mommy, in hardcover, is available for purchase through Mascot Books: <https://mascotbooks.com/mascot-marketplace/buy-books/childrens/still-my-mommy/> or through the author’s blog: www.stillmymommy.weebly.com.

If you’d like to suggest a book to members, please email us at info@hopefortwo.org.

Hope for Two member Carrie Boos’s daughter, Elle.



ASK THE THERAPIST

BY CHRISTINE BYLEWSKI, LCSW-R, BCD

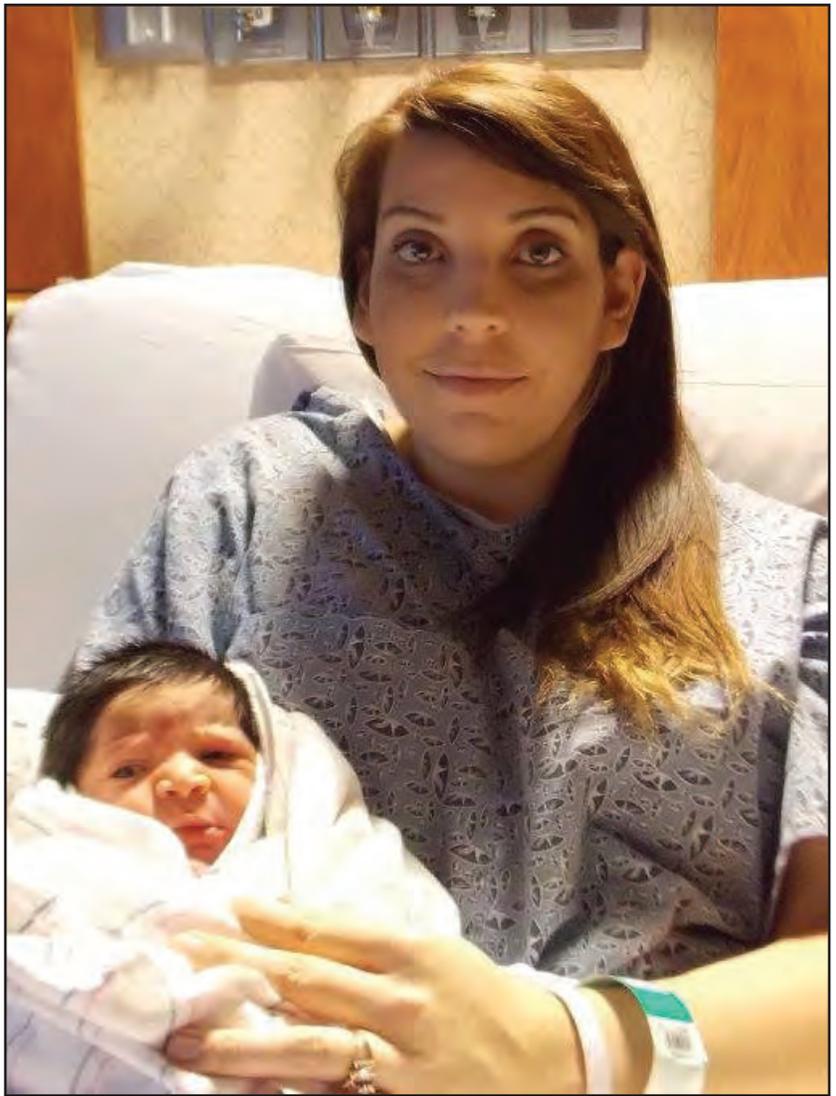
Chris is a licensed clinical social worker, Vice-Chairwoman of Hope for Two...The Pregnant with Cancer Network Board of Directors and a co-author of the Hope for Two Volunteer Support Woman Training DVD.

Q:

I have never liked change. And now I have to deal with this change in my health. I never even knew I had cancer. I did not feel sick..."just pregnant". How can I live the rest of my life knowing I have to deal with cancer and whatever changes it might create? I am angry, sad and frustrated.

A:

There is absolutely no doubt that change is NOT the strong suit of we human beings. We like the status quo. Even when it isn't great, we still like what has been. I only have to look through my Buffalo window to see the changing landscape. A few, yellow leaves under the trees, cooler nights, and shorter sunny days. Alas, Fall is here. So we are reminded by Mother Nature that change simply IS. A good strategy however, is not to think about all the days ahead. Compartmentalize to just a few. Thinking too far ahead creates anxiety. There are too many variables in that future equation which we may not be able to envision, let alone have any control over. Remember the old adage, "One day at a time"? Well it is a good one. Change is inevitable. A better strategy to use is focusing on the here and now. A wonderful book to learn more about this approach is called, "Mindfulness for Beginners" by Jon Kabot Zinn. Take a look at it.....one page at a time. I think it will help you find a way to soften the challenge of change and perhaps, find a more graceful way to embrace it. ♪



Hope for Two member Elizabeth Hollimon with son, Oliver.

If you live in the Western New York area and would like to serve on the Hope for Two Board of Directors, please contact Patty Murray at info@hopefortwo.org.

testimonial

“*It just feels really good to see that someone else was in pretty much the same boat as me and now she and her baby are doing well. I look forward to connecting with [support woman] Tracey.”*

- CHRISTINE H., MASSACHUSETTS

Pregnancy After Cancer

BY ELYCE CARDONICK, MD, FACOG

Being diagnosed with cancer during one's reproductive years raises a concern about the harmful effects of chemotherapy and radiation on ovarian function. It is commonplace for men diagnosed with cancer to preserve sperm prior to treatment and it is becoming more commonplace for women to preserve their fertility as well either by preserving a portion of unstimulated ovarian tissue, or stimulating the ovary to produce multiple follicles then fertilizing them and freezing embryos for future implantation in the woman's uterus. Women without a current partner who prefer not to use donor sperm can also freeze oocytes for future fertilization. The risk of infertility with chemotherapy depends on several factors including the type of agent and dosage used, the age of the patient, the extent of surgery involving the cervix, uterus or ovaries. The risk of infertility after chemotherapy given during a pregnancy has not been studied.

Women enrolled in the Cancer and Pregnancy Registry are encouraged to also inform us of children born after the pregnancy during which they were diagnosed with and treated for cancer. Pregnancies subsequent to completing cancer treatment, especially after the first two years during which the risk for cancer recurrence is higher, should not increase one's risk for cancer recurrence. Women in the Cancer and Pregnancy Registry have not reported having infertility or difficulties conceiving after chemotherapy treatment during pregnancy. In fact, 48 women in the Cancer and Pregnancy Registry who were diagnosed with cancer during pregnancy went on to have subsequent pregnancies after completing cancer treatment. The

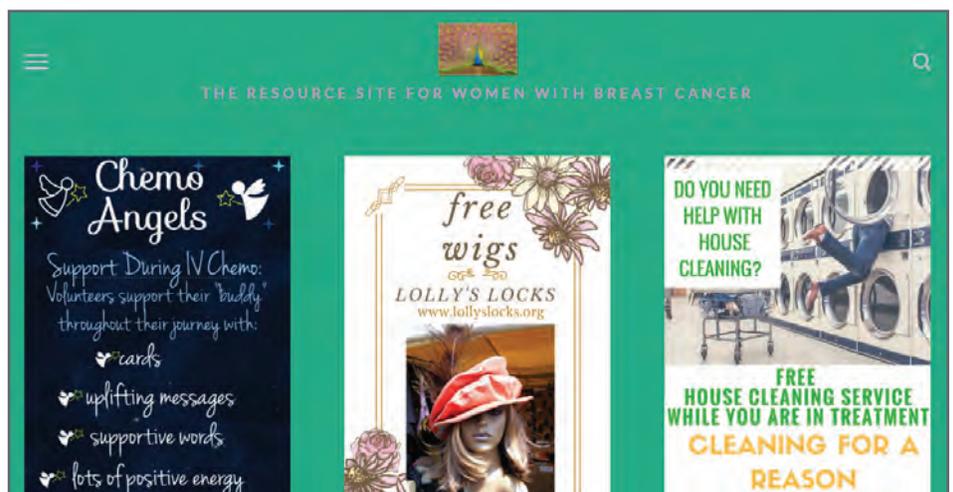
majority of women were diagnosed with breast cancer during pregnancy and the next most common cancer type was Hodgkin's Lymphoma in six cases. Three patients conceived after treatment for ovarian cancer, and two after melanoma during pregnancy. The mean time from the primary pregnancy during which cancer was diagnosed and treated until the delivery of the subsequent pregnancy was 22 months. Thirty seven of the 48 women conceived a pregnancy subsequent to chemotherapy during pregnancy. Resumption of spontaneous menses occurred in the majority of cases and pregnancies were conceived spontaneously. There has never been a study comparing the incidence of infertility after chemotherapy given during pregnancy to infertility for women of the same age, receiving the same agents who were not pregnant at the time of treatment. The children conceived after a prior pregnancy complicated by cancer did not have an increased incidence of birth defects or complications. ❧

“THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A STUDY COMPARING THE INCIDENCE OF INFERTILITY AFTER CHEMOTHERAPY GIVEN DURING PREGNANCY TO INFERTILITY FOR WOMEN OF THE SAME AGE, RECEIVING THE SAME AGENTS WHO WERE NOT PREGNANT AT THE TIME OF TREATMENT.”

Dr. Elyce Cardonick, MD, FACOG, is a maternal-fetal medicine specialist practicing at Cooper University Hospital, New Jersey, and is a member of the Hope for Two Advisory Board. She is the creator and Director of the Cancer and Pregnancy Registry, maintaining the data and publishing the outcomes. She is available to consult with women and/or their physicians to address medical questions pertaining to their specific cancer and pregnancy situation. For more information, visit: www.cancerandpregnancy.com or call 1.877.635.4499 (toll free) or 1.856.342.2491.

Check out this BLOG:

www.peacockcollective.org is a resource site for women with breast cancer. The blogger is *Hope for Two* member Juliette Graziano.



Got News?

www.hopelfortwo.org

Hopeline is printed to share ideas and stories among members. If you'd like to share your story, birth announcement or information for publication, please contact us!

INFO@HOPEFORTWO.ORG

1.800.743.4471

Hope for Two...The Pregnant
With Cancer Network
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FIND US ON FACEBOOK!

Materials published in Hopeline are not intended to provide medical advice, which should be obtained from a qualified physician. Information and ideas included do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of all members.

The Hopeline newsletter is produced by Hope for Two member Jodie Orzechowski. Jodie dedicates her time to the newsletter because the photos and stories are inspiring and comforting. The newsletter is a way for her to pay it forward.

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