



December 2, 2008



I know from personal experience that the holiday season can be a very hard time for cancer patients.

At this time last year, I was on top of the world. I was a 25-year-old newlywed and my husband, Demetris, had just returned from deployment in Iraq. Then, on December 18, 2007, I learned I had breast cancer. I was frightened and scared and went through my holidays thinking about surgery and chemotherapy. Fortunately, I had the love and support of my family to get me through this difficult time.

Then in January, I made the first step in taking back my life from cancer. I decided to obtain a second opinion, and my doctor referred me to UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center. My first appointment at UNC was with a team of physicians that made me feel relieved and confident in their decision that my cancer was treatable. UNC Lineberger made me feel like I was their only patient!

After several tests and meetings with my team of doctors, we made a decision to do a bilateral mastectomy, chemotherapy, and reconstructive surgery. Through all of the cancer treatments and driving a hundred miles round trip to Chapel Hill for my appointments, I continued to live my life.

My enjoyment and passion is beauty pageants. In addition to my job, chemotherapy, getting sick, and taking many medicines I found the energy to continue to compete in beauty pageants. It was my healing therapy at times when I thought my treatments were too much for me to handle. Today, I am proud to say that I am Mrs. Cumberland County International!

This year I share my story with you in hopes of supporting others. I ask that you take just a moment to help those who need a show of support. I say to you everything is possible, enjoy your loved ones, the feast and everything that the holidays bring! And please take the time to support UNC Lineberger. Your gift will help UNC Lineberger continue to give personal care and attention to their patients, developing treatment plans specifically for them. It is because of their excellent care that I am able to continue with my passions.

I hope you will also take a few moments to fill out the enclosed card of hope. Please return it with your gift. UNC Lineberger staff will hand deliver the cards to someone battling cancer and brighten their day. It is amazing how a small token of support can make a big difference.

Thank you for your past support. I hope you will join me this holiday season in bringing hope to those with cancer.

Sincerely,

LaTeacha Coleman
Fayetteville, NC