

Hi, my name is Karen Kjeldgaard and I live in Hamilton County. My story is a story of a miracle. In 2010, I was diagnosed with Stage 1 Breast Cancer. All my life I have dealt with lumpy breasts. I had surgery in my younger years to remove benign tumors. After having my children, it seemed that the tumors went away but my breasts were still lumpy. I was also the woman that made sure I had my annual mammogram to the day. In March of 2010, I went for my yearly mammogram and was called back to do a second mammogram due to some differences in the right breast from the last pictures. So I had the second mammogram and was called into the office and told that there were some problems and they need to set me up with a breast surgeon. At that moment the only name that came to me was the doctor who helped my friend who had just passed away from cancer, Dr. Valle. The nurse set up the appointment. I returned a couple weeks later and had a biopsy. The biopsy was a little scary. I was numbed in the right breast and put on a table with a hole in it for my breast. Dr. Valle did the biopsy and it was ok. He decided to do an MRI next. It came back ok. I went back for my follow up appointment and Dr. Valle was going to cut me loose and have me come back in 6 months for another mammogram. He decided to do a manual check on the right breast just to be sure. As he was doing the manual checkup he notice that there was a lump high in the right breast that was not there a month before. He did an ultrasound but could not be sure of what it was. I was scheduled for an ultrasound biopsy that week. I went in and laid on the table as I did with the biopsy. I could tell when he finished that something was not right when he held my hand and told me not to worry he would make sure everything was fine. Two days later I got a call at work from Dr. Valle's nurse she asked me if I wanted to know on the phone the results or did I want to come in. I did not want to wait any longer so I told her to just tell me. She told me I had cancer and we needed to make an appointment for the following week to talk about options. I went to the bathroom at work and cried my eyes out. I never thought in a million years I would have breast cancer. I had just gone through 6 months of treatment with my best friend who had breast cancer and uterine cancer and passed away just 4 months prior. All I could think about was if the same thing was going to happen to me. The following week I went in for the appointment. Dr. Valle said he felt like we had caught the cancer early but since there were two areas in the right breast and the left breast was not looking good we should think about removing both breast. I just wanted the cancer out of my body so I could go on with life. I told him take both breast I didn't need them anymore. I choose to do reconstruction at the same time. My breast cancer was estrogen positive. I went to see the plastic surgeon Dr. Woody Kennedy. My surgery was schedule for July 15th at 11:00 am. I will always remember this date. My oldest son was born on July 16th. The only thing on my mind at the time was making sure he had an ice cream cake for his birthday. The night before the surgery I stared at my breast in the mirror for a long time knowing that in the morning they would be gone. I wondered what I would look like afterwards. How would my husband look at me with the huge scar across my chest? On July 16th my journey of healing began. It was the hardest 8 weeks of my life. The pain was horrible but I knew that the cancer was gone. My cancer had not broken through the milk duct wall and my lymph nodes were all clear. No chemo or radiation. I thank my girlfriend who had passed away for being my guardian angel through this. In October 20, 2010 I received my breast implants. I did not have the nipple tattoos until 1 1/2 years later. For many months I would feel guilty because I did not have to have Chemo or radiation. I saw women who suffered like my friend and felt like I did not have to fight as much as them, so I wasn't deserving of being a breast cancer survivor. After a few months, I was able to meet other women who also did not have to have chemo or

radiation after surgery. Then I heard about Giuliana Rancic who went through the same thing I did. I knew then that I should not feel guilty because I did not suffer through chemo and radiation like other people. I have now been on Femora for 3 more years to lower my chances of the cancer coming back in my ovaries or other female parts. I love being able to support women who are going through the same type of breast cancer as me so that they do not feel the guilt that I felt. It makes me very happy to represent Susan G. Komen in the FAB 15 Ambassador Campaign to promote support and awareness.