

Community Is Stronger Than Cancer



The Cancer Support Community Greater Philadelphia at Gilda's Club is an organization that understands the overwhelming emotional toll that cancer has on the entire family, including the spouses and young children of the patient.

Jen's cancer story, much like other people's cancer, became a terrifying reality for her and her family.

Jen Lankin is a 39-year-old wife and mother of 3 girls and is recovering from a bone marrow transplant. In May of 2016, Jen was diagnosed with leukemia. As the mother of two young girls—Addison 9 and Mallorie 6—this was especially devastating.

Jen been feeling sick for about a month with a high fever and low energy. Her doctors were sure it was just the flu or mono. But it wasn't to be so for Jen, as on May 13th, 2016, her doctors called her and told her to go to the emergency room immediately due to an extraordinarily high white blood count. Jen knew something was very, very wrong.

Instead of heading to the beach that weekend with her fiancé as planned, Jen ended up spending the next 30 days at the University of Pennsylvania for the beginning treatment of advanced acute myeloid leukemia. I did not catch it early.

While Jen began the early stages of treatment, her concern was always with her girls. As a recently divorced mother, Jen wondered how her girls would deal with a divorce and now the possibility that

their Mom might be dying. She was fearful for them and for herself, who might be facing some very devastating decisions. What would happen to the girls if she wasn't there? Would they be able to rebound from this?

Jen went back to teaching in the spring of 2017. "Cancer/schmancer"... she thought she was fine. But she wasn't fine. In May, Jen started feeling sick again. The leukemia had come back—with a vengeance. Extensive treatment followed as Jen prepared for a bone marrow transplant.

Thankfully, the transplant was successful, and Jen is in remission!

Throughout this difficult time, Jen found her family surrounded by the support they received at the Cancer Support Community at Gilda's Club. Jen said, "They guided us through our cancer journey with a support group that held my girls and I together emotionally. We were immersed in a network of people who are battling cancer, just like us. Most importantly, they provided so many more "little moments" that put smiles on my daughters' faces—from the squeals of anticipation as they received bags of donated school supplies to getting our family portrait taken with Santa and Hanukkah Harry at the holiday party...every little moment is meaningful."

While Jen's recovery continues, she remains thankful for the support network she has gained at Cancer Support Community Greater Philadelphia at Gilda's Club. For more information on how you or a loved one can get support for your cancer diagnosis, please call 215-441-3290 or visit www.cancersupportphiladelphia.org.




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