



Our Stories

CAROL

My road through breast cancer has been an adventure! I was diagnosed at the age of 69, just before Memorial Day of 2012. My treatment plan was a lumpectomy in June, chemotherapy July through November, followed by radiation. The lumpectomy revealed a much larger tumor than expected so I chose a double mastectomy scheduled after chemo.

After the final six-week checkup from all the physicians, my husband and I embarked on my post cancer bucket list road trip. We had never been to the west coast, so that is where we headed. After a visit with my daughter in Denver, we went to Las Vegas since we wanted to see the Hoover Dam. We drove to Santa Barbara and along the amazing California coast to Monterey, and then met my son's family in Yosemite followed by a trip to San Francisco. We then headed north along the Pacific coast through northern California, Oregon, and Washington and took the ferry to Victoria, British Columbia and Vancouver. We came through Seattle, Idaho and Montana on our way home. What spectacular things we saw that we had only read about. My favorites were the sequoias and redwoods of California, as well as the sea lions and seals along the coast!

Near the end of my chemo treatments, I was invited to a wellness day hosted by Unite for HER. It was my bad week and I wasn't sure I would be able to last the full day. The program was so good, and I did stay! Kind, knowledgeable and professional therapists presented helpful information. Things I had heard about but had never tried, like yoga, acupuncture, healing massages, Reiki, and nutritional information. At the end of the day I chose yoga and acupuncture. Since I was scheduled for my double mastectomy, I didn't begin my therapies until after the surgeries, radiation and road trip were finished.

I began these therapies uncertain of how they would help me. After using my original vouchers for acupuncture, I went back for a second series of 12 treatments. I came away with less stress, better sleep patterns, healthier eating choices, more regularity, less pain from tight tissues, feeling stronger and more comfortable. The yoga presenter, Alison Donley, made it seem that I could try this for the first time at the age of 70. I never thought I would enjoy yoga as much as I do! The instructor has such an encouraging manner and makes allowances for restrictions to positions. She provides adaptations so that you can comfortably achieve the positions presented in the practice. The breathing techniques have given me the composure to face challenging and stressful situations. Her practice has enhanced my flexibility and aided my balance. I have continued with the yoga practice for a year now and am disappointed whenever I have a conflict and cannot go to my classes twice a week. I find the sessions have aided my recovery and improved my range of motion.