

HOPE

Community Cancer Center



SURVIVOR STORY | This Is What Hope Looks Like

Finding Strength in Humor

Melissa Briggs turned to family, friends and her sense of humor to take on breast cancer.

When Melissa Briggs moved to Roseburg 24 years ago, she didn't plan on being a 911 dispatcher here for just as long.

"It was supposed to be a short-term thing," Briggs says.

Her knack for staying calm under pressure and seeing the humor in life has proven invaluable for this Douglas County Sheriff's Office 2023 Dispatcher of the Year during her long career – and when life threw her some tough curveballs starting with a breast cancer diagnosis.

After missing her annual mammogram thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, her next exam revealed something, and Briggs was quickly scheduled for an ultrasound that revealed a smaller cyst in addition to what was found during her exam. The smaller cyst turned out to be cancerous.

"I called them Thing 1 and Thing 2 – you know like Cat in the Hat," she says with a laugh.

More testing revealed the cancer was small and encapsulated and hadn't spread to her lymph nodes.

"They told me if I had to have breast cancer, this was the best one to have," Briggs shares.

That doesn't mean her journey would be easy, however, and Briggs leaned heavily on her family, friends and sense of humor to embrace the unexpected.

"I thought we'd just 'melon-ball' it out," she says. "But it turns out I have what I call 'my-body-is-a-jerk' gene so there were lots of curveballs."

Some of those curveballs were the result of literal gene testing and genome mapping.

"It turns out I have a special mutation," Briggs says. "The good news was that it meant I don't share the gene with my sister or daughters. The bad news was that we found out the particular type of cancer I had meant I was high-risk for a recurrence of my breast cancer or related cancers that are harder to treat."

That news necessitated 20 weeks of chemotherapy to bring her chance of recurrence down to just two percent. While she

did experience some complications with bone density and her chemo port ("That 'my-body-is-a-jerk' gene thing again."), Briggs completed treatment on March 1, 2022, about nine months after her journey first began.

"I called it my delivery day," Briggs says.

As a longtime Roseburg resident, Briggs knew about the Community Cancer Center.

"I used to drive past the Community Cancer Center and think 'Oh those poor people,'" Briggs shares. "But I can't say enough good things about the doctors and the treatment I received."

Besides feeling relieved to have Dr. Spence's experience and expertise, Briggs is grateful to have been able to share her humor and joke with staff during such a challenging time.

"Like when I lost my hair during chemo and could joke that at least this would cut down on time getting ready – you know, hair and makeup," she says with a laugh. "I started teasing the radiation tech that here I am lifting my shirt for everyone and don't even get any Mardi Gras beads. Well, on the last day of treatment, she brought in some Mardi Gras beads for me."

"I appreciate how well they were able to meet me where I was and help me through," Briggs adds. "The care and compassion I experienced was just amazing."

Her experience with breast cancer has also given Briggs a different mindset.

"I took part in a Brunch Tea Fashion Show last October where four to five cancer survivors model fashion," Briggs says. "It was way out of my comfort zone but so much fun."

She also took a "bucket-list" trip with her eldest daughter to the United Kingdom and a coach tour of England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland, including the chance to be in London for the coronation of King Charles.

"Having cancer has given me more permission to do things," Briggs shares.

Like a return trip to Scotland this past September for a knitting retreat on the Isle of Arran.

As for future trips, Briggs and her friends are getting something in the works and she hints at a possible destination.

"Maybe South America."

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Introducing:

Amber Woodward, Medical Receptionist

For Amber Woodward, being the first person patients meet at the Community Cancer Center is more than just a job – it's a meaningful opportunity to make a difference. As a medical receptionist, Amber's role includes creating charts, assisting with imagery and gathering information for providers and, most importantly, helping patients feel at ease the moment they arrive.

"A great day is when I can meet new patients and help them feel comfortable," Amber says. "Sometimes, just an extra smile or a bit of good cheer can make all the difference."

Amber joined CCC just four months ago, bringing with her a background in retail and food service. Although she once considered a pharmacy internship, she has found her niche at CCC, where she contributes to caregiving in a way that feels right for her.

"I never thought I'd be learning medical terms or coding, but I'm enjoying it all," Amber says. "It's not an exaggeration to say I'm learning something new every day."

Originally from Laguna Hills, California, Amber moved to Roseburg 20 years ago to be closer to both sides of her family. She quickly grew to love the close-knit community.

"Once you find your niche here, people really have your back," she says.

Her love for learning extends beyond work. Amber is a fan of science fiction, with Andy Weir's Project Hail Mary being a favorite – she's excited to re-read it before the upcoming movie release. She also enjoys crocheting and is currently working on a cosplay costume for the Rose City Comic Con in September.

When she's not reading or crafting, Amber appreciates the camaraderie and support she finds among her colleagues.



"Everyone here is so kind. I know I can always go to Michele or Tracee for help," Amber says. "At CCC, we're always pushing to do better and help others – it's truly an uplifting place to work."

In her downtime, Amber enjoys exploring Roseburg's hidden gems, like the soup dumplings at Delightful Kitchen – a recommendation she happily shares with anyone looking for a delicious treat.

Amber's genuine care and enthusiasm embody the heart of CCC's mission to ensure every patient's journey begins with a smile and a sense of comfort.



ASK THE DIETITIAN

Eating Healthy During Cancer Treatments

ALLIE GOTTFRIED MFN, RD, CSO, LD (SHE/HER)
REGISTERED DIETITIAN, CERTIFIED SPECIALIST IN ONCOLOGY NUTRITION
COMMUNITY CANCER CENTER

A healthy diet can help patients feel better and regain their strength and energy while reducing risks for health problems.

Why It's Important

Quite simply, the food you eat affects how you feel. A healthy diet can help you feel better, regain your strength and energy and reduce risks for health problems like heart disease, diabetes and some cancers. But before making any big changes to your diet, check with your doctor to make sure you don't have any food or dietary restrictions.

It Isn't Always Easy to Make Healthy Choices

During cancer treatment it may not be easy to eat well as you may be nauseated or not feel hungry. You may notice changes in the way some foods taste, especially if you're taking certain medicines. You may also have to avoid certain foods.

For many people with cancer, their caregivers and their loved ones, balancing the need to eat differently with the demands of the rest of the household may feel overwhelming.

Tips for Healthy Eating

Here are some steps you can take to overcome challenges.

- Keep track of what you eat. Use a notebook or an app to write down what and how much you eat.
- Ask your Oncologist what you can't eat due to your treatment plan, or allergies you have.
- Try to eat meals at the same time every day. When your body gets used to eating at the same time, you'll be able to better manage how much you eat. If you're having trouble regaining your appetite, start with small meals of your favorite foods.
- If you're having trouble regaining your appetite, start with small, frequent meals and snacks.
- Try healthier versions of your favorite recipes. Many healthy and easy-to-follow recipes are available online, including from the [American Institute for Cancer Research](#).
- Be sure to focus on protein foods and include vegetables, fruits and whole grains, unless you have been asked to avoid certain foods during your treatment.

How Your Care Team Can Help You

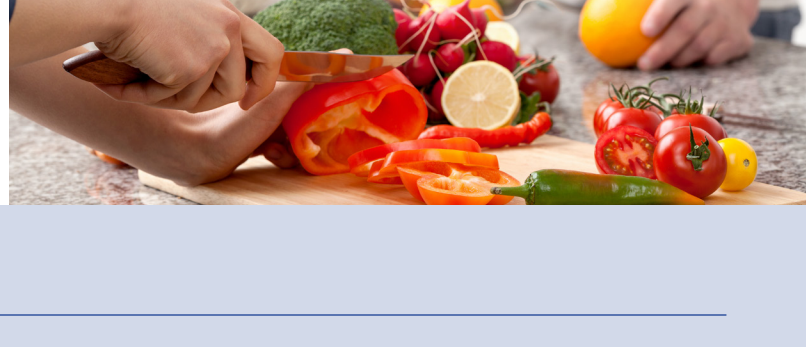
Your cancer health care team includes a Registered Dietitian, a Board Certified Specialist in Oncology Nutrition, whose focus is nutrition during and after cancer treatment. You can make your own appointment by calling the Community Cancer Center telephone number, or asking your nurse.

Our Registered Dietitian helps patients adjust their nutritional intake to optimize health and wellness and minimize side effects caused by cancer and cancer treatments.

Our specialist will also help:

- Develop a Medical Nutrition Therapy care plan that is specific to your cancer and treatment plan, including protein and hydration needs.
- Managed specific nutritional needs such as weight loss, fatigue, nausea, taste change, modification of texture and consistency of foods.
- Weigh patients on a body composition scale to monitor muscle mass and weight change.
- Provide Medical Nutrition Therapy based on a patient's biological needs and circumstances, for example diabetes and renal disease.
- Manage tube feeding, if that is required during treatment.
- Assist families and caregivers with meal planning and food resources.
- Survivorship Nutrition and health planning for the future

For more information, please talk to your oncologist, primary care physician or our registered dietitian.



UPCOMING EVENTS

You're Invited!
COME TO OUR OPEN HOUSE
MAY 1ST from 3:00 – 6:00 PM

COMMUNITY CANCER CENTER

CHAMPION OF HOPE

SPONSORSHIP \$250!

For 45 years, the Community Cancer Center has been a beacon of hope, healing, and innovation in the fight against cancer. As we celebrate this milestone, we invite you to be part of our legacy by becoming a sponsor of our 45th Anniversary fundraiser—a dedication to honoring our past, celebrating progress, and advancing life-saving treatments for the future.

In honor of our 45th Anniversary, we are offering a champion of hope sponsorship opportunity. Donors who contribute at Champion of Hope level (\$250) will receive recognition as an inaugural Champion of Hope and enjoy the same sponsorship benefits as our silver level sponsors. This is a unique chance to be prominently acknowledged for your commitment to advancing cancer care in this community.

JOIN US!

45th Anniversary Open House ★ May 1st 3:00 - 6:00 pm

TOURS DEMONSTRATIONS LIVE MUSIC GREAT FOOD HISTORICAL DISPLAYS RAFFLE PRIZES

Thank You Donors!

The Community Cancer Foundation wishes to express sincere appreciation to the many donors whose contributions have made the Community Cancer Center a success. Below is the list of donors for the months of October, November, and December 2024. These funds are utilized to assist patients with cost of treatment, prescriptions, and other services.

Individual Donors	William Haire	Toby Perry
Gale Ashton	Larry Heath	Robert Rist
Harold Ball	Hedge Jarvis	John Root
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The Community Cancer Foundation would also like to extend a special 'Thank You' to the following organizations. Thank you for your support!

Anonymous Cash Donor	Roseburg Lions Club
Douglas Forest Protective Association	Sherm's Thunderbird Market
Douglas High School Cheer Squad	SMS Leadership Class
Fraternal Order of Eagles Aux 3508	Street Memories Car Club
Frontstream	Terchino Family Estates Wines
Phreesia	The Human Bean
Riddle High School Student Body	Thrivent Financial for Lutherans' Thrivent Choice Program
Roseburg Forest	Umpqua Drifters
Products Employee Contributions	Your Cause

A Very Special Thank You to Our 2024 POWER OF PINK Donors:

AmeriTitle	BNI Umpqua Valley	Douglas High School Cheer Squad	Roseburg Forest Products – Douglas and Dillard Plant Employees	Roseburg Lions Club	Sherm's Thunderbird Market RNDCL	Terchino Family Estates Wines
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Board Members

Thank you for your time, talent, and expertise you have given to the Community Cancer Center through your active volunteerism while serving as a trustee on our board.

Mary Gilbert <i>President, Executive Committee Trustee</i>
Tom Nelson <i>Secretary/Treasurer, Executive Committee Trustee, Investment Committee</i>
Garret Stenbridge <i>Vice-President, Executive Committee Trustee</i>
Neal Brown <i>Executive Committee Trustee</i>
Roan Doan <i>Executive Committee Trustee</i>
Guy Kennerly <i>Executive Committee Trustee, Investment Committee Chair</i>
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Brian Boswell – Trustee
Becky Bright-Jones – Trustee
Blair Brundige – Trustee
Trent Drake – Trustee
Tim Freeman – Trustee
Dell Goodwin – Trustee
Cheryl Gray – Trustee
Neil Hummel – Trustee
Elin Miller – Trustee
Kristen Sandfort – Trustee
Chris Swanson – Trustee
Jamie Yrguen – Trustee

Cancer Support Resources

For more information or appointments, contact Angelia Freeman - 541.672.0072 or afreeman@cccrose.org

<p>Cancer Support Group Monthly meetings hosted by our Patient Mentors. This group is designed for anyone who has, or had, cancer and those who care for them. Meets: Second Tuesday of each month, 1 – 2:30 pm</p> <p>Tobacco Cessation or Semi-annual Weekly meetings or program classes designed with coaching and mentoring to aid the participant in quitting tobacco use for good. Meets: Each Tuesday, 4 – 5 p.m.</p> <p>Spiritual Care Non-denominational spiritual care available for those in need. Meets: By appointment only</p>	<p>OUTREACH, EDUCATION & PROGRAMMING Services for Community Cancer awareness programs, community outreach and conference facility reservation.</p> <p>PATIENT RESOURCES AT OUR CAMPUS Douglas County Cancer Services Patient resource that helps patients with lodging, travel, wigs, turbans, prostheses and financial aid. Contact: 541-440-9409</p>	<p>Executive Director Tammy Turner</p> <p>OHSU Radiation Oncologists Michael Marietta, M.D. <i>Medical Director</i></p> <p>David Gallardo, M.D.</p> <p>Nurse Practitioner Cynthia D. Kusler, F.N.P.</p> <p>Steelhead Oncology Stephen A. Williams, M.D. Joshua M. Weese, M.D. Sara Ray, MSN, FNP-BC, OCN Valerie Cooper, NP</p>
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