Inspiring News and Stories of
HOPE
Community Cancer Center

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SURVIVOR STORY | This Is What Hope Looks Like

Living with Grace

Clarice Harmon enjoys life with the help of plenty of faith and gratitude.

When Clarice Harmon moved from Vancouver, Washington, to Roseburg at 19, she imagined building a quiet life with her husband and raising a family. Now, at 77, she reflects on a life full of resilience, love and unwavering faith, especially in the face of Stage 4 metastatic breast cancer.

After welcoming her first son, Ken, Clarice dreamed of expanding her family and became inspired to adopt after learning about Oregon children in need of parents and families. She and her then-husband chose to adopt two more children, including Daniel at age 5. Baby Melissa followed some seven years later after a two-year wait, completing their family in 1981.

"We had started to reconsider," Clarice says. "That was a hard wait."

Life evolved, as it often does. After her divorce, Clarice settled into an active and independent life in Roseburg with grown-up kids and grandchildren.

In 2010, a regular mammogram paid off when doctors were able to detect a trouble spot early. Clarice credits her commitment to never missing a screening with the fact that treatment required only lumpectomy and radiation instead of more invasive or complicated treatments.

"I've always been faithful with my 'mammos,'" Clarice says. "I'd encourage every woman to make sure they're getting checked regularly."

In 2017, another routine mammogram indicated a suspicious shadow in her tissue. In hindsight, Clarice wishes she'd pursued the concern more aggressively. A mammogram in 2021 indicated the spot was still there. After a biopsy and MRI, Clarice received the diagnosis in June of metastatic breast cancer. Stage 4.

Her reaction was not fear, but resolve rooted in faith. That faith grounds her, especially when remembering her sister, who battled cancer but passed unexpectedly from an aneurysm at 68.

"I'm not afraid. I'm grateful and hopeful," Clarice says. "You just never know how you'll go, so I'm enjoying life as much as possible. I have plenty of faith and plenty to be grateful for."

Today, Clarice is treating her cancer as a chronic condition. Her regimen includes

"I'm not afraid. I'm grateful and hopeful...I have plenty of faith and plenty to be grateful for."

anti-hormone pills and an anti-hormone monthly injection. She's focused not just on survival, but on living well.

"The goal now is to treat it and live with it," Clarice says. "I'm looking forward to each day that comes."

Those days include activities such as working out at Planet Fitness three times a week, attending a monthly cancer support group and participating in Mass. More than just routines, these activities are how Clarice chooses to stay present and engaged,
no matter what the circumstances.

"Even if you can't move or walk, you can pray," she says. "God has a plan."

At the Community Cancer Center, Clarice found more than treatment, she found a network of care.

"They took me by the hand and led me through," she says. "The staff is so kind and caring. I've never been out of the loop. Whatever question I might have, they either know or they find out and call me back."

She praises her oncologist, Dr. Weese, as a "brilliant person," and encourages others to trust their care teams.

"Everyone makes their own decisions about their body, but listen to the people who went to school for this," she advises. "Then make your choices."

In recent years, Clarice found love again. She met her current husband at the Roseburg Senior Center when he came to play bingo while she came to cook. After decades of being single (20 years for Clarice, 30 for him), they continue to enjoy a joyful companionship. Now they go to bingo together every Wednesday and, while he plays again on Fridays, she heads to Mass.

Clarice's message for others is as simple as it is powerful: "I just hope I can help even one person. I'd encourage women to get their mammograms and, if anything is suspicious, be proactive."

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Introducing:

Tracee Van Slyke

A steady hand behind the scenes.

For nearly two decades, Tracee Van Slyke has been one of the steady, knowledgeable presences behind the scenes at the Community Cancer Center. Her official role may center on coordinating new patient records and imaging for radiation oncology, but her real impact lies in the consistency and deep commitment she brings to every task and the warmth she shares with her coworkers.

Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, Tracee moved to Roseburg in seventh grade. Since then, she's built a rich life rooted in community and connection. Along with her husband Dan, they've owned local grocery stores, operated a Roseburg deli and raised two children. Now, they're doting grandparents to four grandchildren. She first joined CCC 19 years ago after working in the front office of a gynecologist practice.

"I've had lots of jobs here," she says.

From assistant receptionist to medical transcriptionist, to handling bereavement support and front desk operations, Tracee has worn many hats, each one with a quiet dedication to making sure patients receive timely and accurate care.

With the rise of digital tools like Dragon Speech that provide voice dictation, she transitioned away from full-time transcription to focus on new patient intake and radiation-specific coordination. Today, Tracee ensures every outside referral is appropriate for CCC's radiation oncology services while gathering all the necessary medical records, pathology reports and imaging.

"Radiation is done by imaging, so getting that information quickly and correctly is critical," she explains. "We used to deal with a lot of disks. Now it's all digital and shared in basically real time."

At 68, Tracee is past traditional retirement age, but she's not slowing down.

"I absolutely love what I do," she says. "It keeps me mentally and physically sharp. And it's really special helping the doctors be prepared so they can provide the best care possible. With other clinics, patients might wait weeks for results. We work really hard to avoid that."

Tracee's career at CCC began during a transitional moment in her life. After being treated for minor melanoma in 2006 (though not at CCC), she became more attuned to the world of cancer care. Inspired by CCC's mission and atmosphere, she applied and was hired by then-executive director Mel Cheney.

"It was a time when I was very self-focused," she reflects. "Working here helped me get outside of myself. You see that some people are going through so much and still manage to be grateful and happy. That really shifts your perspective."

She's quick to praise her coworkers and the team of oncology doctors she supports.

"They're just different," she says with a laugh. "They're compassionate and understanding with both patients and staff. They're great to work for."

When she's not at the Cancer Center, Tracee lives a vibrant and grounded life on a cattle ranch in Glide with her husband, a former county commissioner and current director at Wildlife Safari. Together, they manage about 60 head of cattle, some horses, a few dogs and cats—including a recently rescued Border Collie—and host cattle roundups complete with barbeque a couple of times a year.

"I love living where we do and the lifestyle we have," she says. "If I didn't work, I'd probably be a hermit."

Outside of work, she enjoys going to church and the simple peace of ranch life.

"I'm super content and satisfied." Tracee says. "I don't have much of a desire to travel. I just enjoy what we have."

That quiet satisfaction radiates in everything Tracee does and captures one of the many reasons she's such a valued part of the CCC team.

ASK THE DIETIAN

There's No Sugarcoating Added Sugar

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

Sugar comes in shapes and sizes
But there are some more surprises
Not everybody realizes,
Sugar also has disguises!

The public has been told that, collectively, consumption of refined added sugar is higher than considered healthy. High sugar intake has been linked to the rise in obesity, and from obesity to hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and even violent behavior.

Sugar is considered a "pro-inflammatory" substance, meaning it can increase inflammation in the body. Many disease states are thought to originate from inflammation. Additionally, high sugar intake and poor blood glucose control can reduce the body's ability to heal, which can be a significant issue after surgery for example.

In 2001, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimated that Americans consumed 150 pounds of added sugar a year. Apparently, that number was derived by adding the total supply of sweeteners for all commercial uses and included honey, corn syrup and sorghum. It also included sweeteners added to products that humans do not consume like dog food and food lost to spoilage. Without fanfare, the USDA, with new methodology, has lowered the estimated intake of sugar consumption to around 76 pounds a year. Although this number sounds better it still means the average sugar intake is approximately 20 teaspoons a day. One teaspoon of sugar equals four grams of carbohydrate, so 20 teaspoons is a whopping 80 grams and 320 calories.

The American Heart Association and the World Health Organization recommend that women consume no more than six teaspoons of added sugar a day and men nine teaspoons (I guess men need to be sweeter!). When you realize that a regular soda or a donut contain 10 teaspoons of sugar, it's easy to see how we can eat and drink far more than the recommended amount.

Understanding food labels comes into play. Processed foods like spaghetti sauce, so-called "healthy"

whole-grain cereals, whole-grain crackers and whole-grain breads can contain two to four teaspoons of added sugar. Low and non-fat salad dressing and ice cream replace the omitted fat with sugar. Refined sugar is "lurking" in your kitchen, and often where you least expect to find it!

Sugar why do you suppose
Is also known as galactose?
Glucose, fructose, all of those
As well as sucrose and lactose.

It can be challenging to read a food label to determine the sugar content. For example, a carton of skim milk's label states 12 grams of carbohydrate and 12 grams of sugar. This is not "added sugar," it's lactose and galactose, the natural carbohydrates found in milk and part of the 12 grams of total carbohydrate. Look at the ingredient list on products and see if sugar has been added. It could be listed as actual sugar or might be hidden behind healthier-sounding phrases such as "evaporated cane juice" or "brown rice syrup." If present in a large amount it will be among the first few ingredients listed. Being observant of the added sugar in food can help keep your intake to the recommended amount.

Alternative sweetening agents on the market include Stevia and Splenda that provide little to no calories. Stevia comes from a plant native to Paraguay. Sweet-tasting components of the plant leaf are isolated and processed, making Stevia 300 times sweeter than sugar.

Splenda starts out as regular sugar and is molecularly rearranged. It is about 600 times sweeter than sugar and is heat stable and can be used in cooking. These products have been well evaluated in many countries, are deemed safe to consume and are a good option if you are trying to lower your sugar intake. Honey and agave, although more natural in appearance, are high in sugar so monitor your portion size!

Sugar likes to change its name
Almost like a childhood game
Something else it might proclaim
But it is sugar just the same!

Another sugar product is high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). HFCS is like table sugar in that it contains fructose and glucose. Instead of a 50/50 mix, HFCS has been changed to around 45% glucose and 55% fructose to make it taste sweeter. While scientific controversy abounds about the role of HFCS in the obesity epidemic in this country, reducing all sugars in the diet is probably a good stand to take. The good news is that food manufacturers have been using less HFCS in products in response to consumer demand.

Another area to be aware of is "juicing" with fruit as it's a quick way to consume a lot of calories. Research has shown that the body doesn't seem to register the calories in highly sweet beverages in terms of satiety so you can end up taking in more calories than needed because it does not satisfy your underlying hunger for solid food.

One sugar-related question we hear often in the oncology world is: Does sugar feed cancer? According to the American Institute for Cancer Research, American Cancer Society and many, many other renown researchers in the cancer world, the answer is no. While research does not show a direct link between consumption of added sugars and cancer risk or survival, excessive sugar intake can contribute to a poor overall dietary intake which can lead to obesity, which is a risk factor for cancer.

When a person has a positron emission tomography (PET) scan, they are injected with a radioactive glucose, and since glucose is a good fuel source for cancer cells, they gobble it up, light up the scan and can be located, giving the impression that glucose is "feeding" the cancer cells.

Any growing or fast-dividing cell requires a fuel source and glucose satisfies that need. If there is no glucose around, however, your liver will make glucose from fat or protein in your diet thus providing a steady stream of the one substance the body, including those cancer cells, likes best!

> ***Sugar it has names to spare***
> ***Its presence is felt everywhere***
> ***Sweetness that it likes to share,***
> ***So now we will be more aware!***

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. To the right, is the list of donors for the months of January, February, and March 2025. These funds are utilized to assist patients with cost of treatment, prescriptions, and other services.

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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!

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With heartfelt gratitude, we extend our deepest thanks to you—our incredible Champions of Hope. Your generous support is more than a donation; it's a powerful statement of compassion, commitment, and belief in a brighter future. Because of you, hope is not just a word—it's a reality for those whose lives are being touched, changed, and uplifted.

Your contribution fuels the mission, inspires progress, and reminds us all that together, we are a force for good. Thank you for being a beacon of light, a source of strength, and a true Champion of Hope.

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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, community members were invited 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.

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$50,000+

GOLD
$25,000+

SILVER
$10,000+

BRONZE
$5,000+

CAREGIVER
$500+

CHAMPION OF HOPE
$250

Cancer Support Resources

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

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

Tobacco Cessation Program
Weekly meetings or semi-annual classes designed with coaching and mentoring to aid the participant in quitting tobacco use for good.

Meets: Each Tuesday, 4 – 5 p.m.

Spiritual Care
Non-denominational spiritual care available for those in need.

Meets: By appointment only

OUTREACH, EDUCATION & PROGRAMMING
Services for Community
Cancer awareness programs, community outreach and conference facility reservation.

PATIENT RESOURCES AT OUR CAMPUS
Douglas County Cancer Services
Patient resource that helps patients in treatment with lodging, travel, wigs, turbans, prostheses and financial aid.

Contact: 541-440-9409

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