

Just An Itch?

Dodie Baker is a 52 year old, stay at home, mother of two, from Rushville, NY in Yates County. In October of 2009 she felt an itch on her left breast. When she scratched it she discovered a lump. At the time she had a severe head cold so she thought it might be swollen glands as the lump was close to her armpit. Within a couple of days the cold was gone, but the lump was still there. There was no history of breast cancer in her family and worst of all she didn't have any health insurance because of the prohibitive cost.



She telephoned a friend who was a cancer survivor and she referred her to Thompson Hospital who in turn gave her Mary Corwin's name. Mary Corwin is a registered nurse with the Yates County Public Health Dept. and is a case manager for the Cancer Services Partnership of Ontario, Seneca and Yates Counties. The Cancer Services Program of Ontario, Seneca, and Yates Counties provides breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer screenings FREE to men and women who meet program eligibility.

Dodie called Mary and says that Mary Corwin was awesome and walked her through the whole process. She says that Mary made all of her initial appointments and encouraged her and the doctors to have the diagnosis and treatment completed quickly which she did. On Oct. 13th Dodie had a screening at Family Planning Services in Penn Yan. The following day she had a mammogram and sonogram at Soldiers and Sailors Hospital in Penn Yan. And on Oct. 16th she had a biopsy done at Geneva General.

Then Dodie described the waiting game to see if the tumor was cancerous. On Oct. 20th the call came from the Family Planning nurse practitioner that it was cancer. Dodie and her husband Ted immediately prayed for peace over their family and for no fear to enter their home. "I am grounded in the Lord and he is and always will be in control", said Dodie. "He has kept us all focused and no fear has entered our home. He has put Mary into our lives for a reason. She has made it much easier to deal with the bumps along the way, and always has a sympathetic ear." Mary also came to Dodie's home and helped her with the paperwork to sign her up for insurance. Mary set up the appointment with the surgeon to discuss Dodie's surgery options.

On Nov. 5th, Dodie lost her left breast to a mastectomy at Clifton Springs Hospital. Unfortunately, the oncologist at Clifton Springs didn't take her insurance, but Mary was right there for Dodie again. She called Dodie to tell her that the Interlakes Oncologists at the Sands Cancer Center took her insurance and had set up an appointment for her. Dodie is now undergoing chemotherapy at the Center. Mary also found grant money through a grant from the Komen Foundation to the S2AY Rural Health Network to pay for a prosthesis when the first place Dodie checked with would not take her insurance.

Dodie says, “It has been comforting to have people who understand the process guiding us. The services have been provided in a personal, caring manner. It has been a comfort to have this support while going through a difficult time. Mary takes the burden of navigating through the process off our shoulders.” When asked how we can help get more people screened for cancer Dodie said, “Spread the awareness of the program to women before they have cancer. Make sure all the people who have been through the program talk it up.”

If you or a loved one feel a lump or are a woman over 40 or a man over 50 with little or no health insurance call the Cancer Services Partnership toll free at 1-866-422-CANCER (1-866-442-2262). They provide FREE breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings. If you need help with breast cancer expenses or costs in Ontario, Seneca or Yates Counties call 1-800-299-2995 or visit www.s2aynetwork.org for more information.