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*2012 Annual Report*

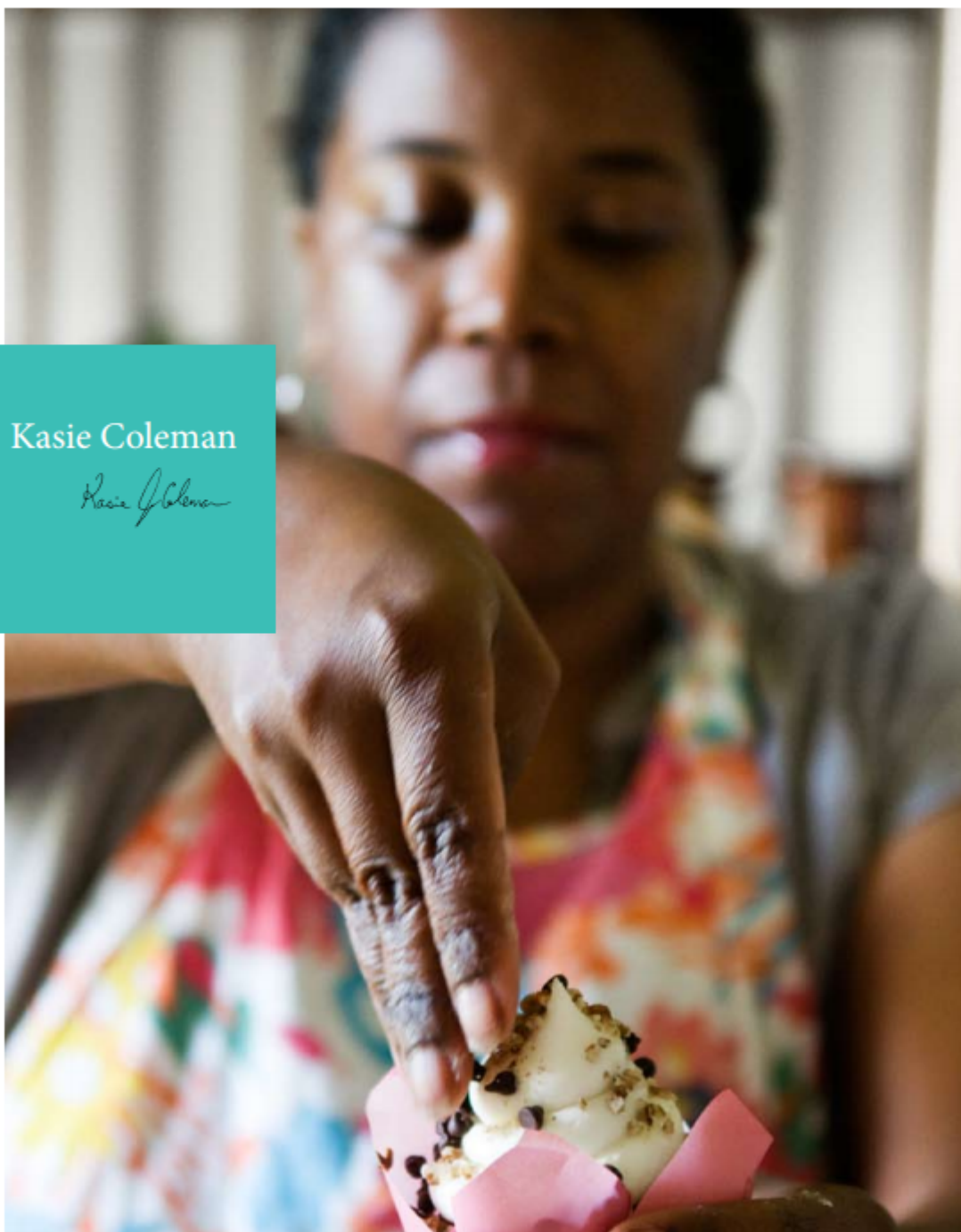


Cancer  
Treatment  
Centers  
of America

at Southwestern Regional Medical Center

Winning the fight against cancer, every day.®

*Kasie Coleman,  
Peritoneal Mesothelioma  
Patient*



Kasie Coleman

*Kasie Coleman*



## Kasie Coleman is in the Business of Bringing a Little Something Sweet into People's Days.

At Sugarbelle, the bakery she owns in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, this 36-year-old mom of two young sons specializes in creating delectable pralines, Bundt cakes, cupcakes, and tea cakes. Kasie spent months developing more than 80 varieties of cakes, all based on what was originally her grandmother's apple jelly pound cake recipe.

Kasie loves that her work provides a sense of connection with her family, and that she is able to honor her grandmother, who first taught her to bake. "When I started thinking about opening the bakery and made my first apple jelly pound, I gave it to my mom and the first bite took her back—it was like tasting nostalgia," Kasie says, "and the more I baked, the more I felt connected to my grandmother; I just felt like she was with me."

Though Kasie has always loved to bake, time in the kitchen became an especially therapeutic release in the last year for this survivor of peritoneal mesothelioma, a rare cancer that occurs in the thin cell walls which surround the abdominal cavity. She underwent several years of intense treatment after a long search for an accurate diagnosis.

### A Search for Answers

Kasie's journey began in October 2008, when she started experiencing pain in her abdomen. Her primary care physician initially told her she had likely bruised a rib and prescribed anti-inflammatory medication, which seemed to help initially. Over the next two years, though, Kasie's symptoms of pain and bloating would return repeatedly with increasing intensity, and she would be falsely diagnosed with first chlamydia and then ovarian cancer. She finally received an accurate diagnosis of peritoneal mesothelioma following surgery to repair an umbilical hernia in July 2010.

Kasie remembers receiving the news, and the shock of this new diagnosis: "The surgeon tells me I have peritoneal mesothelioma

—he had sent it to three labs to confirm the diagnosis." At this point, Kasie says, "it's kind of going in one ear and out the other. I'm thinking, you've got to be kidding me—I'm 34; my kids are 2 and 7."

### Finding the Right Kind of Care

After struggling to find a doctor who could treat her rare cancer, Kasie finally found a cancer treatment center in another state that offered treatment for her unique disease. In August 2010, she underwent Hyperthermic Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy (HIPEC), a surgery during which a heated, sterilized chemotherapy solution is delivered directly to the abdomen during a surgical procedure, and then returned to Baton Rouge for follow-up chemotherapy treatments. But CT scans in February 2011 revealed more tumors; her chemotherapy protocol was changed, but another scan in August 2011 showed additional tumor growth. She then underwent a second HIPEC, which had little, if any impact, in fact, her tumors had doubled in size. "They said there was nothing more they could do for me," Kasie says, "and they suggested I search online to see if there were any clinical trials I could try."

It was at this moment that Kasie reached her lowest point. "I was in bed, depressed and distraught," she says, "when the commercial for Cancer Treatment Centers of America® (CTCA) came on." She had seen the commercial before, but she had assumed her cancer type was too rare to be treated at CTCA. Desperate, Kasie went online and asked one simple question through the Live Help function on the CTCA website: "Do you treat peritoneal mesothelioma?" Almost immediately, she got a response: "Yes."

Two days later, Kasie was on a plane to CTCA in Tulsa. "It took me by surprise how quickly it all happened," she says. "I was a little skeptical, but I figured it was worth a try." Her skepticism didn't last long once she reached Tulsa. After being greeted by a town car at the airport, she arrived at the hospital and saw immediately that it was not like the other cancer treatment



## Kasie Coleman

centers she had visited. "I walked in, and at this point, I was impressed. It was totally different. It looked like a hotel; there was no hospital feel." The extensive, compassionate care she received in her initial consultations with CTCA clinical staff confirmed her sense that she had made the right choice. "I had tests over the next four days," Kasie says. "That made me feel at ease; I thought, something's going to happen."

And she was right. Kasie met with Samuel Bielgk, MD, FACS, who told her that he would order some of her old tumor tissue and do tumor testing, which none of her previous doctors had offered. Dr. Bielgk, MD, assured Kasie that he would present her results to the tumor board to ensure her rare case was fully examined. "That had never happened before," she says. "I was just blown away."

### Healing for the Body and the Spirit

Alongside the clinical expertise she was provided, Kasie noticed other, critical differences at CTCA. The first was a sense of hope, something that Kasie had been missing. "The optimism alone was enough for me. My doctor gave me hope," she says. The other was a sense of spiritual connection that surprised her, and ultimately offered her invaluable comfort. "Everyone I spoke with was really spiritual. During one of my first appointments, my nurse asked to pray with me, which threw me off. No medical professional had ever offered to pray with me; and she really prayed with me, which shocked me." Kasie also learned about the blessing ceremony that had been part of the hospital's construction, wherein Stakeholders and patients had inscribed scriptures and inspiring quotes on the building's foundation. "I just had a spiritual sense that I was in a totally different place," she says.

A week after Kasie returned home from her initial visit to CTCA, she received a call from Dr. Bielgk, during which he explained that the tumor board had advised another, different chemotherapy protocol to shrink the tumors first, which would be followed by a third HIPEC. In March 2011, Kasie began a three-month chemotherapy regimen, traveling from Baton Rouge to Tulsa for each treatment. "People at home asked me why I didn't just do the chemo at home, and my response was, 'I could, but what you don't

understand is that the mindset at CTCA is so different; I don't want to mess with that.' I got excited going there—which sounds strange—but I really did." Throughout her treatment, Kasie continued to benefit from the optimism and hope she felt so strongly at CTCA, as well as from the integrative care model, which offered her critical physical and spiritual support throughout her treatment. She worked closely with a naturopathic practitioner and a dietitian, who helped her make gradual changes to improve her diet. Kasie also received help from the rehabilitation department to get relief from back pain and abdominal cramping. In addition, Kasie says, "Miss Phyllis in the dining room made me personal meals; I went to bible study; I met with the chaplains; I was a regular at bingo; I got facials; you name it, I did it."

At the end of her chemotherapy treatment, in June 2012, Kasie returned to CTCA to learn if her tumors had shrunk enough to make her eligible to receive a third HIPEC. Ready to buckle down and endure another HIPEC treatment, she says, she felt prepared to tackle these next steps. "I prayed before my appointment," she says, "and I was feeling good. I expected that the tumors had shrunk and that I would then plan another HIPEC." Instead, the nurse had different news: Kasie was not a candidate for HIPEC because instead of shrinking the tumors, the chemotherapy she had undergone at CTCA had eradicated the cancer. No tumors were evident in her CT scans. Kasie was shocked. "I said, 'excuse me? You checked the liver? The small intestine? The pelvis?' It was all clear. I was speechless."

### The Blessing of Recovery

Now, back at home in Baton Rouge and fully immersed in her life—baking up a storm, driving carpool, living her life—she still marvels at the blessing of her recovery. "Now, there's no evidence of cancer. And it's because CTCA was willing to try." When she returns to CTCA for follow-up care, she continues to appreciate all of the qualities that set her treatment there apart. "For me, it's just the overall vibe of the place. It's not your sterile medical environment. I'm greeted from the driver to the front desk to the dining hall and medical staff. Everyone is willing to explain everything to me—to spend time. I love going there; it's like going home."

*No case is typical. You should not expect to experience these results.*