

LOCAL DANCER AND THEATRE PERFORMER TACKLES LUNG CANCER WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND THE LOVE OF DANCE

by JENNIFER JAMACK



“I guess what makes me different is that I look at myself as a woman who has cancer, not a cancer patient.” – Anne Kraft

Anne is not your average 80-year-old woman. She is incredibly vibrant and her positive personality shines through the room the moment she walks in the door. When I first sat down with Anne, she spoke about her love of dance, and the moment that she noticed something wasn't right with her body during a competition.

“All of a sudden, I felt a shortness of breath that I hadn't experienced before. I couldn't breathe deeply,” she shared.

The discomfort lingered on well after the dance competition, so Anne decided to see a pulmonologist and run some tests. After multitude of tests, a PET scan showed positive uptake in a 1.8cm nodule of her left lower lung. She then had a bronchoscopy which led to a CT guided biopsy. Flagler Hospital's lung cancer nurse navigator Susan Hession reached out to Anne and helped her schedule surgery immediately. The pathology results from the biopsy revealed invasive adenocarcinoma, a form of lung cancer. The cancer was diagnosed in stage II B and indicated that one lymph node had the presence of cancer. Anne was told that she would need to have chemotherapy during her treatment plan. She has successfully

responded to four chemotherapy treatments and is being closely monitored by her medical oncologist and pulmonologist.

While talking with Anne, she mentioned how well her clinical team at Flagler treated her, especially the navigational assistance she received from Susan. She also mentioned how quickly she has recovered from the surgery due to her love of dance.

“The show must go on,” she said. “During all of my chemo treatments, I still found a way to do the things I love and put a smile on my face when I would wake up in the morning. I made sure I put on makeup and still worked on days I felt good and even danced on days I felt my best.”

Anne even participated in a local play at the theater and continued to work at her day job during her treatments.

“It was really important for me not to dwell on anything and I tried my best to continue to show up. I kept looking forward to dancing again, and enjoyed the days I did get to rest on the weekends and recover.”

Anne spends her days volunteering at A Classic Theater (ACT) and working at

a Law office. She is incredibly inspiring, and has recently competed in a dance competition with her instructor, Felix Solis where they received extremely high scores. Anne attributes her smooth recovery to her positive outlook. Instead of allowing this cancer to knock her down, she continued to participate in the things that she loves. One thing that Anne mentioned before our conversation ended, really stuck with me. She said:

“It's really important to have something for yourself, and feel needed. That's why I decided to show up every day, even when it was hard. I may be eighty years old, but I don't feel eighty at all.”

Luckily, for Anne, she immediately noticed something was wrong when she had trouble breathing and because of that, and the quick attention she received from the Flagler Hospital's team of doctors, the cancer was caught at an earlier stage. Anne also stressed the importance of knowing your body, and if something feels wrong, to go get it checked out. We were honored to be able to speak to this amazing woman who continues to smile, even during difficult times. She really is the epitome of the phrase: “The Show Must Go On”.