

JULIE PLUMMER - 2007 HONORARY SURVIVOR CHAIR

Komen Quad Cities Race for the Cure® announces that 3-year breast cancer survivor Julie Plummer of Montpelier, Iowa will serve as the Honorary Survivor Chair for the 2007 Race.

Julie views her experience with cancer as a challenge, somewhat like an athlete overcomes an obstacle. As an athletic and energy-filled individual, Julie and her husband, Jerry, participate in numerous outdoor sports and activities. The couple actually spent 3 years sailing through the South Pacific in the 1980's, staying on sea for up to 21 days at a time. They've also bicycled through the Canadian Rockies, went on horseback riding trips, and Julie has participated in RAGBRAI and rowing activities through the Quad Cities Rowing Club.

"There were a lot of days when we sailed that I was seasick or homesick. But, I think the cancer experience is like that, too. It's a challenge. I don't worry about it on a daily basis because then it would be life-consuming," said Julie.

As a result of a self-exam, Julie was diagnosed with stage 2+ breast cancer in July of 2003 at the age of 45. She was treated with a lumpectomy and sentinel lymph node removal, chemotherapy, and radiation. She also takes the drug Arimidex. Julie's mother is a 2-time breast cancer survivor.

While Julie maintains a positive attitude towards beating cancer and a passion to live life to its fullest, she does deal with certain effects of the cancer and treatment such as weight gain, decreased stamina, and weakened arm muscles.

"I was so active, it was frustrating to finish treatment and not just pop back. When I first finished, I felt like I was 80, then 60, and just now approaching my actual age," she said.

Julie is employed by the Eastern Iowa Community College District as manager of the Iowa Waste Exchange, a program to assist businesses and industries in recycling and reusing materials. She received abundant support from her co-workers throughout her treatment.

"The cool thing is that people you think are just co-workers or acquaintances really step up to the plate. As a person who doesn't like to accept help, it was a big life lesson for me that people really wanted to give their assistance and support. One of the most poignant things that a co-worker said to me was, 'Julie, if this happened to you, it could happen to any of us. We're vulnerable, too'". Now, when co-workers schedule mammograms or have a loved one touched by breast cancer, they usually visit with Julie about it due to her circumstances.

Through her role as Honorary Survivor Chair for the 2007 Komen Quad Cities Race for the Cure®, Julie hopes to be a living example that breast cancer can be beat.

"I can be living proof that you can get through this. It's scary, but yet it's just another challenge," she said.