

2017 Inspiration Awardee – Jessica Cash



In October 2015, at 32 years old, Jessica was diagnosed with Stage 4 Colorectal Cancer. She was told it was inoperable and incurable. Her social worker at Karmanos Cancer Institute said to her, "cancer doesn't have to be a death sentence and one can learn to manage and handle it like any other chronic disease". Jessica went on to complete 12 aggressive rounds of chemotherapy and remains on a maintenance treatment today.

She has continued to work full time and with her passion to help others, Jessica decided to speak out. Jessica applied to become an ambassador for the Fight Colorectal Cancer Organization and flew to Missouri for a training program. She and her husband Aaron were selected to be ambassadors for the organization. As part of this effort she was featured on the Jumbotron in Times Square, New York City so that everyone could see that you are never too young to get colorectal cancer.

Jessica was also successful in the initiative to have Governor Snyder proclaim March as Colorectal Cancer Month in Michigan 2017. Additionally, she will be one of the featured survivors in *On the Rise* magazine that helps spread awareness that colorectal cancer is not limited to older men but effects men and women of all ages and that it is on the rise with those under 50.

Jessica is a participant in a young adults with cancer support group at Karmanos Cancer Institute's Weisberg Center where she mentors other recently diagnosed. During March 2017, she and her social worker created a campaign/public education event about early detection of colorectal cancer and encouraged people to be aware of signs of colorectal cancer and receive screening. Art groups at the center created boxer short posters that were placed around the building with message to the public around symptoms and screening using catchy phrases like, "Save the Butts" and "Get your Rear in the Clear;" literature was made available to the public as well. Weisberg Center staff participated as well by wearing boxer shorts over their scrubs as a reminder of the importance of screenings. This event received local media coverage and Jessica was interviewed along with her oncologist; she was receiving treatment at the time.

She is an inspiration for her efforts locally and nationally to spread awareness about colorectal cancer and to educate the public. When it comes to cancer, she believes, "Never give up, and never give in".

2016 Inspiration Awardee - Cecilia Pope



Since her breast cancer diagnosis in 1995, Cecilia has made a significant impact as a leader in community-based breast cancer prevention and control in the metro Detroit area.

She is a member of WAVE (Women Achieving Victory and Esteem), a local breast cancer support group and has formed strong bonds with survivors. She is a founding member of the Sisters Network - Greater Metropolitan Detroit Chapter and has served as Treasurer and Vice-President providing an impact of breast cancer awareness in the Detroit area. She is also a frequent walker and fundraiser for the American Cancer Society-Making Strides against Breast Cancer and Komen Detroit, Race for the Cure.

Cecilia continues to make a significant difference in the community through the Witness Project of Detroit, a breast and cervical cancer outreach and education program based in Karmanos Cancer Institute. She was part of the first group of "Witness Role Models" who were trained and asked to witness or share their personal stories of diagnosis, treatment and survival. In turn, encouraging women to be screened regularly. She has reached over 1200 women as of August 2016.

"Cecilia has been a leader in metro Detroit in terms of mobilizing groups to address cancer disparities, raising cancer awareness and supporting women in overcoming cancer-related fears, especial in the African American community. She is extremely knowledgeable about breast cancer and women in the community view her as a trustworthy source of information. Interpersonally, she is kind and generous."