

Lymphoma Survivor's Message is Simple: Savor the Beauty of Los Alamos, Savor Life

To appear in LA Monitor October 08



DyAnne Short, 56, is one of those rare people you meet, who was born, raised and stayed to live her life in Los Alamos. A typical 50's "canyon runner", and married for 36 years, the fourth generation of her family is now working at the lab.

Her love affair with Northern New Mexico spills into the air the minute you talk to her, but, in November of 2006, after a lifetime of excellent health, the joy was interrupted by cancer.

A pain in her leg and hip had family and friends thinking that she had a touch of sciatica; but the pain increased, and despite a trip to the ER and medication that took the symptoms away for a couple of weeks, the pain increased through Xmas of '06 and into January. That's when a pain specialist ordered an MRI and those awful words, which anyone who has heard them can attest to, shocked her to the core. She had cancer. The MRI showed that her lymph nodes were swollen, everywhere in her body, despite no physical exam having been able to detect them. Like so many other cancers, DyAnne's had crept up on her silently, with few symptoms, and with nothing to detect by blood tests or physicals. By that time the cancer was pretty advanced.

More scans and biopsies showed that DyAnne had Follicular Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma, a subtype of lymphoma where the cells are grouped into clusters or follicles. A course of chemotherapy at LAMC followed, consolidated by cutting edge radiation treatment at the Arizona Cancer Treatment Center. "I was so radioactive my husband couldn't even be in the same room as me – it was like something from out of space!" Of the chemo days she remembers, "you feel like the treatment isn't worth it, but then you remember that life will return".

For DyAnne, the treatment worked. She knows, though, that it's a treatable, not a curable, disease. "I'm living with cancer as a chronic disease, and I know it will come back some day". When and how often, DyAnne tries not to think about. "You realize what's important in your life." Today DyAnne's philosophy is simple: savor the beauty of our wonderful surroundings, wrap your family around you and Hang in There!