

Wellspring Member, Lynn's Story

The theme of this year's Boardwalk's Walk for Wellspring, is **Walk for the one you Love**.

Whether you are a cancer patient, a survivor, friend, family member or have lost a loved one, you have a story behind your journey. I'd like to share *my* story with you and tell you about the role that Wellspring continues to play in my recovery.

My cancer journey started October 13, 2013. I received a call at 8:45 am on a Monday morning telling me I needed to come in and see the specialist ASAP that morning. I had been booked to see this ENT specialist 5 weeks later, so I should have realized something was not right.

I was escorted into the examining room and informed I had a suspicious mass in my ethmoid sinus. Talk about being blindsided! Before I even arrived at the Doctor's office that morning, they had already booked me for my first surgery just two days later. The first part of tumor would be removed and pieces sent for biopsy. The second surgery would be with a neurosurgeon as the tumor was pressing into the dura that covers the brain. I awoke from the first surgery to be told the pathologist could not confirm what type of cancer I had. They would have to consult with a pathologist from Toronto to help with the diagnosis. Four weeks later I was informed that I had Low Grade, slow growth Sinonasal sarcoma with neural and myogenic features. Apparently it had been difficult to diagnose, because at the time there were only 28 cases in the world reported.

Once the diagnosis was made, I met with all my surgeons and it did not take long for them to get back to me with a second surgery date of December 2nd. 2013, for the removal of my remaining tumor. It was an extremely big surgery and I had a great deal of fear around this. I had three surgeons - two head and neck and one neurosurgeon involved. Because of where the remaining tumor was located, the neurosurgeon had to go in through my forehead. I have had lots of surgeries but none to this extent. I was assured I had a great team. I also was offered counselling as I waited for my impending surgery, which helped tremendously.

At this time I was experiencing another issue. My doctor was sure that she knew what it was, but she sent me off for a MRI and a cat scan. Her diagnosis was correct and my sinus tumour was discovered. I give my family Doc. much credit for acting so fast and getting me to the specialist and so do my surgeons. I was told by my Neurosurgeon that I would have had a stroke within 6 months had this not been found.

I followed up with 35 rounds of radiation. A result of the surgeries was a loss of some vision in my right eye along with double vision. I saw an eye surgeon in hopes that correcting my vision would be possible but unfortunately it cannot be done.

It has been quite a journey, and it still continues. I have been left with double vision in my right eye when I look downward. Having bone and tissue removed has also shifted my eye back and down. I lost my tear duct which makes my eye run quite a bit. As annoying as it is, I find gratitude that I still have my eye and have good vision straight on. I chose to have another procedure with my eye and ENT surgeon to have a tube put in the corner of my eye to help drain the tears and to remove all the scar tissue left in my sinus. I was also left with some markings on my forehead from the screws and plates, and Radiation has shrunk some bone therefore one can see where I was 'put back together.' At this time I will sit on that decision as to whether or not I'll proceed with having reconstruction done.

It has been 8 years since this all started, and I still struggle with exhaustion and my emotions.

I was introduced to Wellspring early on in my recovery. I have participated in Aquafit therapy, mediation, yoga, reiki, therapeutic touch and when I was ready I joined a survivors' group where I was able to talk with other cancer survivors who understood what I had been going through.

I have found so much support and comfort physically, emotionally and spiritually in the programs that I've taken at Wellspring, but perhaps the most important thing of all is being able to surround myself with other cancer survivors. We understand how it feels to go through this experience. We get it.

Each year I participate in Boardwalk's Walk for Wellspring and find it so therapeutic. Wellspring does not receive any government or united way funding. Walking for Wellspring is so personally important to me because I feel that I can give back for all I have received.

I am definitely a different person having gone through my cancer journey. I am still trying to find my new normal. I am stronger, more compassionate, and try not to take anything for granted. I wish I had never had cancer but I see life differently in so many ways and I am grateful for that.

I believe from my own hands-on experience that we are very lucky to have so many wonderful no-cost Cancer programs and services available at Wellspring and amazing Doctors in London.

On behalf of all Wellspring London members, I'd like to add my personal thanks to each of you for participating in Boardwalk's Walk for Wellspring. Your donations help Wellspring continue to provide their life-saving no-cost programs and services to people like me.

I urge you to spread the word about Wellspring. If you know of anyone who is dealing with cancer, let them know that Wellspring exists. It will make a huge difference in their lives...I promise you!

Thank you for reading my story and for Walking for the one you LOVE!

**For more information on Wellspring London's NO-COST programs and services, please visit:
wellspringlondon.ca**