



Bright Light Foundation

Linke Jolet

2009 BLF Recipient



Hello, my name is Linke Jolet. I am a native of New Iberia, LA, where I still live. I have been married to my wife, Jamie, for 26 years, and we have two grown children, Lauren and Brock.

My wife and I have both worked in the oil industry for 25+ years in many roles. I started out as a structural fitter and over the years have run construction crews offshore, been an estimator, a project manager, and currently I am an engineering tech. My wife is currently a measurement editor.

My cancer story began after the recent 2008 storms in the Gulf of Mexico. I was working on a special project offshore as a consultant, helping to coordinate reconstruction. While I was out there, in late January 2009, I started having what I thought were symptoms of a throat infection and swollen glands. The medic on the platform treated me, and when I returned home, I went to see my family doctor who prescribed antibiotics. Immediately afterward, I began having severe headaches. My family doctor recommended I go to see an ear, nose, and throat specialist (ENT).

In February of 2008, the ENT ordered a CT scan of my neck where he saw something suspicious. On February 27, he performed a syringe biopsy, which came back positive for cancer in a lymph node. In March 2008, a tonsillectomy was performed, removing my left tonsil and part of an adenoid. The biopsy confirmed the tonsil was the origin of the cancer. Having been a very healthy individual, never having smoked or having had any of the other risky habits that would increase my probability of getting cancer, this was a complete shock to my family and somewhat to my doctors. Needless to say, we were overwhelmed with the situation.

Next was a PET scan followed by 35 radiation treatments. The worst side effects have been severe mouth sores and thrush, which continue to bother me at the time that I write this. My hair is just beginning to fall. At this point, I have only had one chemo treatment. I will have four courses in total, one every three weeks or so. Then, after that, another PET scan will be done to determine the success of treatment and if surgery or any other course of action will be necessary.



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I am hoping this fight will be totally successful and that I can get back to a normal life soon. It is hard not to be able to work regularly and contribute to my family's finances or to help around the house--particularly outdoors--and to miss out on many other activities with my family that I used to take for granted.

I really miss food. I have not been able to eat solid food since April due to the severe mouth sores. I am really trying avoid getting a stomach tube. So far, I have been getting just enough nourishment from liquid supplements that my wife doctors up for me. She gets very creative to try to increase the calories, nutrition, and add flavor. I also receive fluids and extra calories in the form of infusion therapy two to three times a week at my doctor's office. I cannot wait for the day I can eat a real meal. I do try small bites as often as I can, and I can't tell you how great real food tastes, even in mini bites. If one good thing can come from this part, I think it is that I will appreciate and savor every bite of anything I eat, no matter what it may be.

I still count myself very blessed. As a cancer patient, sharing space with others that are fighting their own battles, I have witnessed triumphs and setbacks. There are so many people that continue to inspire me to keep going. Cancer is a very humbling experience for me and my family. We have learned to put aside pride and allow others to help. Thank God for my family, friends, church, employer, and even strangers for being very supportive and for offers of prayers and words of encouragement. It is critical to surviving this trial. With God's grace, I will soon be in remission and never have cancer again. But I will always have lessons learned, friendships gained, new compassion, a greater appreciation of life and living, and renewed hope and faith that God is never far from me.