



Bright Light Foundation

Chasity Cole

2012 BLF Recipient



After I finished college, I worked as a Cardiology nurse, raising three children with my childhood sweetheart who worked offshore. I've always been in the oilfield industry. It was his passion to be in the oil and natural gas industry, and we were happy living in Northeast Texas raising our children who were ages 1, 3 and 5.

One evening in August 2004, I slipped in the shower and thought I had pulled a muscle. I continued to work full time and loved to take care of my patients. In early November that year, I underwent a 13-hour surgery. I was opened from the thoracic cavity

around my heart and completely down my spine from the neck. Doctors initially believed I had a benign tumor that only had been seen in osteoporotic women in ages upwards of 60. This type of tumor traditionally should have not occurred in my 26-year-old body. One day the following April, I sat down at home and couldn't get up, losing feeling in my legs. I was thankful family was with me.

An X-ray in the emergency room discovered that the reconstruction of my spine using bone from both hips – as well as several vertebrae – was completely eaten with this tumor entangling my spinal cord. The surgical team worked 15 hours to strip the tumor off my spine “like a Twizzler,” to quote doctors. The following days proved to be the worse pain and fear I never imagined possible. I was given the newest innovative treatments that were available. Not once did anything touch the aggressive giant cell tumor. The result were quarterly CT Myelograms, constant daily pain, three rods, 136 screws, a steel cage, and many hours put in by family, friends, strangers, doctors, nurses and my three wonderful children.

I will not be healed, but I've been lucky to be touched by kindness and so much love. I soon learned my cancer had spread to tissue in both lungs and recently into the left breast. Two more surgeries stabilized me. I have been to every football game, baseball practice, gymnastics meet, cheer competition, birthday party, Honor Society induction, theater and band performance – just to grab hold of every second I could of my children's lives.

On Father's Day 2012, I flew to Denver to be with my sister-in-law, who went into preterm labor. My wonderful husband took care of our three children, and I was gone one month when I received “the call.”