

## **MY BREAST CANCER JOURNEY**

Hi I'm Jens Sister Michelle – the lovely reason behind her Breast Cancer Training Challenge. Jen just wanted to be there for me, but like everyone else didn't know what to do or how to help but just by being Jen and loving me is all I needed, however she came up with this idea and I think its fantastic!!!

Now where do I begin – well I found out I had Breast Cancer on my 39<sup>th</sup> birthday, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2009 – what a day!!! My loving husband Mark who has been my rock throughout this was with me thankfully, we just sat in the room crying and in total shock waiting for the Dr to come and take biopsies. Then once I left there my BFF Jodie, my angel was out in the car park waiting for me. She had been talking to Mark and had left work and come to see me. My emotions that day were one of anger, disbelief (even though I knew in my heart before I went in there that it was breast cancer), feelings of why me and also I can do this and get through it, all rolled into one. My 3 beautiful children have been my inspiration everyday to fight this with all my strength.

My Mum and Dad who are no longer with us, I truly believe have been looking out for me throughout this entire journey. I have had many a conversation with them, but the one I was always having with them all the time when I was first diagnosed, was one telling them I wasn't coming up to them just yet, they had to wait for me for another 40 years at least and that I was going to fight this with everything I had for my children and my husband.

Mark has been by my side for the last 3 months, taking 2 months off work to be with me and be there for the children when I couldn't be, which was fantastic and what I needed, as at first I wasn't coping with that, as in not being there for them 100% which I always am. I can't begin to tell you what a difference it makes to have your whole wonderful family and beautiful friends behind you all the way. Even just the little text messages I get can brighten my day and keep me going, or when my BFF Jodie puts beautiful words on Facebook about me it gives you a lift beyond words.

Since finding out I have Breast Cancer I have had a mastectomy to my left breast and 3 lymph nodes removed that were attached to my breast. It took me a while to adjust to not having a breast, but now its just part of who I am and what was needed to be done to get me healthy again. This I found the hardest thing to deal with, that and not being able to be there 100% for my children. I have had another operation to remove all the remaining lymph nodes from under my arms as 2 out of the 3 nodes came back with cancer in them from my first operation. Luck, God, Positive Thinking – who knows but it was totally on my side when the results came in from my second operation, as they were all clear from the 11 nodes they removed. Wow that was the best news I had received so far. My arm still causes me grief, but I am having physio and doing my best to just get on with it.

On 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2009, I started my first lot of chemo, only have to have 4 courses/doses, lots, which is fantastic. The Oncologist said he will make it short and sharp, having it every 3 weeks. So as at tomorrow 27 January 2010, I will be having my 3<sup>rd</sup> one, so only one left after that yah. Now chemo is something else again, you can't describe how you feel for the first week and what it does to your body. I knew my hair was going to fall out and thought, "I know I'm not going to

like it, but its just another thing I have to do” and to be honest I haven’t shed a tear over it. When it did start to fall out Mark gave me a number 4 hair cut, which was pretty funny. Jodie said I looked gorgeous, Jen said I looked like GI Jane and my other sister Sally said I look beautiful and then my loving children said I looked freaky and when it all started to fall out, said I looked a bit like an alien, lol, that’s children for you. My BFF’s hubby then shaved his off to a number 1, as did my husband and a friend, all to support me, which to me is just beautiful.

Now with all this, I still remain positive and look on the bright side of what good the chemo is doing to my body to regain me my health back and fingers crossed to never get Cancer again!

Hi, I’m Jodie - Michelle’s BFF. When Michelle was diagnosed with cancer it was probably one of the worst days of my life, and I will never forget it for as long as I live. In reading what she has written I think she has told her story the best way she can, but it also needs to be told from someone else who loves her as much as I, and her family do.

Throughout this ordeal (I think its fair enough to call it that) Michelle has been a tower of strength and so positive in every way possible. She has dealt with every hurdle so courageously and never once moaned or complained. She has lived for her children and her husband (and hopefully me too lol). So many people have said to me what an inspiration Michelle has been and I truly believe that due to her positive attitude and mental strength she has made this experience as manageable as possible, for not only herself but for those around her as well. She is a credit to herself and to her family and we love her to bits xxxxx.



Mark and I ready to attend my work Xmas function after my 2 operations And before my chemo had started.



Me and my BFF Jodie after shaving my head. Was 15 days after my 1<sup>st</sup> chemo.



My 3 beautiful children and I coming Home from Bruny Island camping This weekend just gone.



Me, Kylie and Jodie at Jodie’s birthday dinner last Friday in my wig.