



IN EVERY ISSUE

# Letters from Our Readers

Special Issue 2005

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As an inflammatory breast cancer survivor of more than four years, I appreciated the information in the article “The Future of Cancer Research” in the Winter 2005 special issue. It helped me understand why it is said that cancer patients are living with cancer and, as yet, there is no real cure. It is another missing jigsaw puzzle piece that adds to my knowledge of cancer and the prospects of survival. Minimal information was shared with me at the time of treatment, and no one explained what would happen to my body following exposure to chemotherapy and radiation. Most of the information I was able to get was through hospital library articles and nurses willing to fill in some blanks. I feel as if I was in a free fall through treatment and am free falling through recovery.

Diane Rasch  
Mentor, Ohio

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As a 13-year survivor of ovarian cancer, I would like to respond to “Lobbying for Health,” and Ellen Stovall’s comments of “grassroots activism being a fairly new development and a hit and miss at best.” Conversations, National Ovarian Cancer Coalition and Ovarian Cancer Alliance are all grassroots organizations started in the early and mid-1990s. They were started at kitchen tables by survivors with no help at that time from hospitals, pharmaceutical companies or the medical profession. Today, they have advanced to worldwide recognition and have exploded into divisions and partnerships in every state. We were at the March on Capitol Hill in 1998 manning booths and speaking to everyone. There is a cancer epidemic in our country. Since we are a smaller group than some other cancers, we have to advocate for our lives and our children. Activism is flourishing, alive and well in the ovarian cancer community.

Linda Smith  
Massillon, Ohio

Marijuana Debate Continues

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In your winter 2005 edition there was a letter from a deputy prosecutor saying that marijuana is terrible, useless stuff, and that 70 percent of some sample

agreed with him. He is wrong. My most recent friend to die of cancer found that marijuana was the only drug that enabled him to keep food down. This man was not looking for a cheap high. He was trying to continue existing. That use is not the same as abuse.

Frazier Rohm  
Vernonia, Ore.

### Survivor Voice

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I was delighted to read in Fall 2005 the story by Kathy LaTour entitled "Now What?" Finally someone is addressing issues after cancer. Too often cancer patients become a statistic of success or failure. Quality of life is an important statistic frequently overlooked between these two ratings. As a four-year breast cancer survivor, I am one year away from becoming a statistical success. While I am thrilled to be alive, the impact of my cancer treatments has been profound. I have had carpal tunnel surgery on both hands, knee surgery from a fall, and constant aches and pains. Like many cancer patients, I have been told it could be coincidental. Thank you for sharing a voice on this issue.

Haralee Weintraub  
Portland, Ore.

### Needed Hope

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I just want to thank you for helping save my life. This magazine gave me hope and the desire to educate myself and fight this disease. This is where I found out about a new drug called Iressa for non-small cell lung cancer. The drug completely destroyed my tumors in six months. April of this year will be one year of taking the drug. My wife and I went from looking at gravesites to looking at houses.

Ricky Sutherland  
Russellville, Tenn.

### Thanks

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I would like to tell you how very much I enjoy your magazine. I had four operations to treat squamous cell carcinoma of the left tonsil and tongue. It just kept coming back. They replaced my lower jaw with the large bone in my leg. A friend told me about your magazine, and the first issue I received had an article about my cancer. How happy I was to finally read information about it. I have passed your name on to another that is suffering from prostate cancer. So your magazine has been a real blessing to three people I know personally. All of us have different cancers, but we all find something interesting in each magazine.

Sharon Grant  
Trenton, Mo.

As a breast cancer survivor, I was very interested in the Fall issue's article, "[Unexpected & Unique](#)," on breast cancer in women under 40. I was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 47 and subsequently found out that I had a BRCA mutation. I was shocked that none of my doctors recommended genetic counseling prior to my diagnosis even though I had a family history of breast cancer. Your article educated individuals about hereditary breast cancer and the benefits of genetic testing, if applicable. I hope you will continue to address this issue in your magazine.

Lori Sklar  
Boca Raton, Fla.

Thank you so much for finally including something [albeit small] on brain tumors. I was diagnosed in 2004 with stage 4 glioblastoma multiforme. I had surgery, radiation, and a year of Temodar. My kids were only 5 and 8 when I had my seizure. Obviously with the statistics on life expectancy being only around 200 days, it was quite devastating at the time. Thanks for the great work.

Kate Burke  
Santa Rosa, Calif.

I am a second-year medical student and future oncologist, and I am continually amazed at the great work you do. Both my mother and aunt are breast cancer survivors and they (as well as I, of course) really enjoy and get an immense amount out of the publication. I am always impressed with the delicate way in which you are able to take the latest findings in the field and simplify them in such a readable fashion.

Kerry Massman  
Columbia, Mo.

Thank you for enabling me to participate in the CURE Patient & Survivor Forum in San Diego by providing a scholarship through the Lance Armstrong Foundation. I have been on disability since April 2005 because of cumulative effects of breast cancer. As I regain my strength and stamina, I look forward to returning to work. The conference was very informative. Getting access to new information and interacting with survivors and faculty are empowering experiences.

Janet Halbert  
Los Angeles, Calif.

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We love to hear what you thought about the stories in *CURE*. And don't forget that we are always looking for good writing from our readers. Send your stories about cancer and its impact on your life to [editor@curetoday.com](mailto:editor@curetoday.com). Keep it to 1,000

words please.

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