

THINK PINK!

Feeling blessed

Waterloo woman praises support group of family, friends in fight against breast cancer

By **MIKE HIBBARD**

mhibbard@fltimes.com

WATERLOO — With a history of breast cancer in their family, Crystal Moody and her cousin would go for mammograms together routinely.

"We would always make a girls day out of it," Moody, a Waterloo resident, said about herself and her cousin, Jamie Mesmer. "Her mom (my mom's sister) and our aunt both have had breast cancer, so with the family history we started going about six years ago

for yearly mammograms."

Moody, 45, was diagnosed with breast cancer in late March. She went on to have more tests and genetic testing, which showed she was progesterone positive (estrogen) and HER 2 positive.

"I had the option of doing a lumpectomy, a partial mastectomy, or having both (breasts) removed," she said. "With the family history and talking with many other people who have gone through breast cancer, I decided to have the double mastectomy, which was done May 31 at

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Photo provided

Crystal Moody (left) with her cousin, Jamie Mesmer. "She has always been like a sister to me," Moody said.

The front page of every Monday edition of the *Finger Lakes Times* in October is being presented in pink in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Pick up a copy each Monday to find content related to breast cancer.

Distraction activities and camaraderie

Both are crucial to folks going through treatment

For those battling cancer, the journey is often filled with physical and emotional challenges that can seem insurmountable. However, Thrive To Survive proves that distraction activities and the power of camaraderie can have a

remarkable impact on cancer survivors' survival and quality of life.



Jennifer Harris

Thrive to Survive

Cancer survivors often navigate a labyrinth of treatments, surgeries, and emotional turmoil.

To address the physical and emotional toll,

Thrive To Survive offers a range of distraction activities designed to help survivors

regain a sense of normalcy and well-being. These

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Photo provided

Crystal Moody, who was diagnosed with breast cancer in late March, is thankful for all the support from family and friends.

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Rochester General Hospital.”

She is scheduled to have a second breast reconstruction surgery Oct. 27. Due to the type of cancer she has, Moody underwent 12 weeks of chemotherapy at Clifton Springs Hospital & Clinic.

“I just finished this past Tuesday — thank-fully!” she said.

Her next step is every three weeks to have more treatments of Herceptin, an anti-cancer drug given intravenously to treat her rare HER 2 positive.

“I really did very well going through the chemo, much better than the doctors or I thought, so I feel very blessed about that,” Moody said.

Moody was quick to

thank those supporting her every step of the way, including her three children: Michael, 27; Noah, 25; and Alexandria, 20.

“I have such an amazing support group, starting with my children, my parents, and so many wonderful family and friends,” she said. “They have been there to take me to appointments, make meals for me, and more.”

Moody also praised Thrive to Survive, a Geneva-based organization that supports cancer patients in several area counties.

“Thrive to Survive has been amazing,” she said. “They paid for me to have a beautiful wig that looks very much like my natural hair, and their emotional support has

been great.”

Moody’s friends organized a team for the Middle Finger 5K in May, an annual run/walk fundraiser for Thrive to Survive held on the north end of Seneca Lake.

“This is such an amazing event,” she said.

Moody said on the weekend before her double mastectomy, her family and friends threw her a surprise party for her.

“They made me a large ‘comfort’ basket with candles, blankets, lotions, and all kinds of things I would need for the surgery and then for the chemo,” she said. “I was so surprised.”

Jen Harris, who coordinates the Middle Finger 5K and founded

Thrive to Survive in 2012 with her friends, Pam Venuti and Roseann Mofte, said Moody heard about the organization from a nurse during one of her first appointments, when she was diagnosed.

“Crystal’s cousin and friend reached out to see how Thrive To Survive could support Crystal during this journey,” Harris said. “Through phone calls, we were able to find out the best ways to support Crystal.”

“Crystal wrote, ‘I am very interested in what Thrive To Survive has to offer as well as ways I can help promote and share with others fighting this awful disease. Thank you so much for all you did to help me get (resources).’”