

# Patient thankful to Alton Memorial for breast cancer treatment

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**ALTON - Helen Shue** moved to Alton from Chicago in May 2012. Not knowing anyone in the area, she chose Alton to escape the Windy Cit's high cost of living and because she fell in love with the beauty of Alton's rivers, bluffs and hilly streets.

Semi-retired and a little bored, she decided to attend the AMH Women's Wellness Fair in November 2012 for "something to do." She was impressed by how friendly and upbeat everyone was, and decided to take part in the breast health screening that was being offered.

During the screening, Dr. Nikol McDonald discovered a lump in Helen's breast. Breast health navigator Malea Watson helped Helen schedule a mammogram in December through the Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer program, followed by a breast biopsy in January.

Then came the phone call that Helen had been dreading. It was cancer. In February 2013, Helen had a mastectomy. While the experience was not pleasant, the care that she received from her physician and caregivers helped her through.

"I was all alone and Malea intuitively knew what I needed," Helen said.

Dr. McDonald is her other hero.

"I have so much respect for Dr. McDonald," Helen said. "She literally saved my life."

Helen has since become a patient of Dr. McDonald's and has had all of her cancer treatments and follow-up testing at Alton Memorial Hospital. And when she visits the hospital, she never fails to stop by to say hello to Malea.

"Malea is a bright shining star," Helen said with a smile.

In 2015, Alton Memorial Hospital was awarded a grant from the Carolyn Adams Ticket for the Cure, Illinois Department of Public Health, Office of Women's Health and Family Services to increase breast health awareness through the "Early Detection Connection."

The program offered educational materials and programs designed to help women reduce their risk of breast cancer.

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