

Breast Cancer Patient Upbeat Despite Surprise Diagnosis

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Michelle Ross in the Alton Memorial Hospital Cancer Center along with nurse Toni Brummett, left, and AMH breast health navigator Malea Watson, right.



Michelle Ross outside the Cancer Care Center at Alton Memorial Hospital along with four of her six children – Farrah, Timothy, Madison and Casey -- and a grandchild, Jaihel.

ALTON, IL -- Michelle Ross would never describe the past year as a fun one, but thanks to the dedicated health care professionals at Alton Memorial Hospital she is looking forward to a bright future.

Ross, 42, found a lump on her breast last November that turned out to be breast cancer. A mother of six and grandmother of two more, she went through the full gamut of treatment at AMH – surgery, chemotherapy and radiation – and feels blessed by every bit of it.

“The environment where you are treated makes a big difference,” said Ross. “Alton Memorial has been wonderful every step of the way. I can’t thank Dr. (Joseph) Talsky enough for encouraging me to get everything checked as soon as I felt something. After we found out what it was for sure in January, Dr. (David) Chung did the lumpectomy. I just love him.”

Following the surgery, Ross had chemotherapy treatments under the care of oncologist Dr. Mark Woodson, then 30 radiation treatments at the AMH Cancer Care Center under the care of Dr. Joel Simmons, nurse Toni Brummett and the Cancer Care team.

“Miss Toni and all of the nurses were so encouraging,” Ross said. “Dr. Woodson was so good to me during the chemotherapy. But I have to be honest, I cried when I lost my hair. But I trusted God through the whole time. I kept going to church the whole time, and my pastor, Samuel White (at Monroe Memorial Church in Alton), also helped me through everything. Cancer is an eye-opener, but with God’s help you can make it through anything.”

“Michelle had not even had her first mammogram when she was diagnosed,” Toni Brummett said. “That should be a reminder to all women to do monthly self-breast exams and schedule yearly mammograms. I know she was devastated by her diagnosis, but she has done great and is so grateful for her care. Michelle is a real success story.”

October is Breast Health Awareness Month, but for Ross and others who have been through treatments, every month is a reminder and a blessing.

“Ms. Ross has been very positive throughout this difficult process of accepting the diagnosis and navigating the sometimes murky waters of tri-modality treatment,” Dr. Simmons said. “It’s a long journey through surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy. She’s been a pillar of faith and has had unwavering trust in our team at AMH.”

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