

NCCF 2009 Scholarship Winners

Jessica Cherry was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma during her final semester of college. She was training for a marathon at the time and two months after fighting through treatment she ran a half marathon, and a full marathon two months after that with the help of "Team in Training" of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. She is now in her first year of medical school to be a physician.

Abbey Cowen is a school teacher who was diagnosed with breast cancer just as she was beginning as master's program. She continued with the pursuit of the master's degree in Teaching and Learning with Technology through an online program while completing her treatments. She also continued teaching, teaching more life lessons than she would have otherwise. Her advice to other cancer survivors is not to be too hard on yourself – allow yourself the chance to feel and heal.

Ashley Dobbs was diagnosed with Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia at the end of her junior year of high school. Despite spending most of her senior year in the hospital, she graduated on time. She is now a college sophomore studying nursing, as she has been inspired by the fantastic nursing care she has received. She encourages other cancer survivors to make the most of the good days, even if there aren't many. She recommends surrounding oneself with good things to help provide hope.

Teresa Eddinger was diagnosed with Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma while a junior in college. She spent the last three semesters undergoing treatment and continuing her studies full-time, while also serving as a friend and role model to other cancer patients. Inspired by the social workers she encountered during her treatment, she is now a first year graduate student in social work. She encourages other cancer survivors to throw themselves into the experience with full force and become involved in every aspect of the treatment process.

Kimberly Hicks lost her leg to Ewing's Sarcoma at age 15, it returned at 19, spreading to her lungs. Then at age 22 she was diagnosed with Renal Cell Carcinoma. Throughout all of this she continued in high school and college and graduated on time with her classmates. She is now in a post-baccalaureate program with plans to become a pediatric oncologist. She devotes a significant amount of her time to raising awareness of the unique situation of young adult cancer survivors through various organizations and encourages others to maintain a sense of normalcy throughout and after treatment as much as possible.

Sarah Jones was diagnosed with Acute T-cell Lymphoblastic Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma/Leukemia at the beginning of her senior year of college. Although her doctors didn't think she could do it, she finished her senior year while undergoing treatment. According to Sarah, "I knew that I had cancer, but cancer did not have me." She continued with her studies through treatment and is now a second year graduate student in forensic science. She encourages other to never take life for granted and always live each day to the fullest.

Rachel Lazono has been fighting an Askin's tumor on her spinal cord since age 15, with two recurrences. During her treatments she found comfort in drawing and art, and so is now senior in college majoring in studio art – happy to be the only known person to survive her cancer at its stage. She encourages other cancer survivors to trust your instincts, speak up, ask questions, and plan little things to look forward to.

Peter Luna is the middle child of ten siblings and is in his second year of studying business and marketing. Having been diagnosed in April 2008 with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia made him realize there are more important things to worry about than the way he looked going to class and caused him to re-dedicate himself to his studies. He is inspired in his fight by his mother's experience with breast cancer 11 years ago. His advice to other cancer survivors is to ask questions at every chance you get.

Zachary Martin was diagnosed with testicular cancer at age 21 and is currently undergoing treatment while attending university to be a certified medical assistant. He was so inspired by the nurses that helped him get to where he is that he hopes to do the same for others. Around the same time he was first diagnosed in 2008, his family's ranch was brushed by a tornado and completely destroyed by a flood. He recognizes you can't fight cancer alone and encourages others who are diagnosed to reach out and look for support, whatever support group or network works for you.

Elizabeth Stower was diagnosed with breast cancer in May 2008 at age 21 while she was taking a semester off from school following the death of her mother to ovarian cancer. Her diagnosis renewed her determination to finish school, but also changed her focus. She was a political science major but now wants to be an oncology nurse. She continues her studies as she undergoes treatment. Her main advice to others is to remember that cancer does not define who you are.

Mario Terrell II was diagnosed with Rhabdomyosarcoma during his sophomore year of high school. He has fought hard to keep up with his studies throughout high school and has graduated with his class, despite undergoing rigorous treatments. He finished treatment in the summer of 2009 and is now a college freshman studying sports management. He has displayed to all around the advice he gives to others, "sometimes the best medicine is hope."

Jennifer Yeh is currently in law school and undergoing treatment for breast cancer and is considering a joint PhD in social psychology because of her experience and skills in conflict resolution. Although it took a year and a half for her to finally be diagnosed, she persevered until she found an answer. And, while on medical leave from school she pursued an internship at the United Nations in Vienna. She encourages others to stay proactive and involved in the treatment process, educating oneself as much as possible.