

A Middleton Mom Finds Strength to Fight Cancer

It was a small lump, nothing to be concerned about I told myself. Besides I had already done the "cancer thing" with my son.

Michael was diagnosed with a brain tumor at 21 months, and given 6 months to live. He is now a happy and healthy 10 year. It was clearly someone else's turn.

My routine mammogram went as planned. The small lump, I was told, was nothing. It wasn't until I had come home from a friend's funeral, which had died from breast cancer, that I got "the phone call." They would like me to go in for a biopsy, but not for the lump issue. Something on the other breast looked "suspicious." I immediately thought they were wasting my time. I could not have the big "C."

After a phone call to my son's oncologist at Massachusetts General Hospital, I found the best surgeon to remove the "suspicious looking thing." Again I was reassured that the "lump" was probably nothing.

Well you can imagine to my surprise when I was told the lump, turned out to be cancer and the "suspicious thing" was nothing! The challenge began. There were all the doctors and hospital visits. There were three surgeries and 8 weeks of radiation. Running and weight training were two of my most important anchors.

As a 44-year-old mother of three children I had no time to be "down and out." Lunches had to be made, children had to be driven here and there, grocery shopping had to be done and never mind the laundry!! I knew radiation causes fatigue, depression and weight gain. I then made one of the best decisions in my life. I had decided that those rules don't apply to me.

I needed to be on point and keep my "life" running smoothly.

My 8-week "voyage" began everyday at 4 a.m. with prayer and meditation and then I was out the door for a run. No matter what the weather, running was a must! Many windy, rainy, snowy mornings could not keep me indoors. As I was layering my clothes on for my run, I kept on thinking about the awe-



COURTESY PHOTO

Jodi Sampson says her son inspires her to beat cancer. When he was only 21-months old, he did. Now he's a healthy, happy 10-year-old.

some high I would feel. It was my time to let everything go, enjoy the peacefulness of the morning, and see the many bright stars that reminded me that there is always hope and more for us beyond what we see actually see.

My radiation appointment was everyday at 7:20 am. Doctors and nurses often told me that my running might get difficult as we progress into the radiation. It didn't. Remember - the rules don't apply. They told me my breathing would become difficult and my skin would become very irritated and I may have to stop running. It didn't and I kept on running and strength training and living my life. I was determined to not let anything hold me back. After the radiation, I was off to the gym for a combination of strength training, plyometrics and cardio endurance training. Nutrition was always an important part of my life, but now it was essential. There was no better cure for my cancer than my own remedy of attitude, fitness and heart.

I knew God wanted me to put my heart into it and I did. In return, he put all the right people in the right places in my life to help me succeed. I felt He was preparing me for something great.

Many people at the gym would ask me what I was training for. My answer would simply be, "Life." Little did I know what I was actually saying, and training for "life" took a whole new meaning.

I think my daughter, Jordan said it best:

"Mom, God chose you because you are at your best, physically, mentally and spiritually that you have ever been in your life to handle this and you are going to be fine".

Yes, I am going to be fine and I am fine and I have a great story to tell....

Jodi Sampson of Middleton wants to inspire others facing difficult challenges. To learn, visit www.standwithjodi.com