



## INTRODUCING YOUR HONOURED HERO FOR THE 2011 **LIGHT THE NIGHT** CAMPAIGN

### Beth Donaldson



I had a cough for a couple of months and really sore ribs. The rib x-ray showed normal lungs and a few broken ribs. I continued to cough. Who knew a simple cough could turn your life upside down for good?

I was a physician. I was a new Mom. I was the healthiest person I knew; or so I thought. Needless to say I, and everyone around me, was shocked to hear that I had a 10 x 20 cm lymph mass in my chest that needed a biopsy. Me? You must be kidding!

As the news of the likely diagnosis set in, our worlds crashed. Yes, it turns out, anyone can get cancer. My mind definitely wandered to the darker places those first few days, but I had this overwhelming feeling that I would be OK.

On April 30th, 2010, my husband and I jumped for joy when we received the diagnosis of Hodgkin's. Why wouldn't we? If you've got to get the Big C, you might as well get one with enviable cure rates. I was lucky, in a way. I knew we could kick this.

Not only was I blessed with a good diagnosis, but I was and am blessed with an amazingly supportive network of family, friends, nurses and physicians. My team was strong and unbreakable and I did my best to mirror them. We tried to remain positive and upbeat no matter how nauseated or exhausted I became, as the alternative option wasn't attractive. I ate well, exercised when I could, and looked at my treatment as a new challenge to conquer. I'd been successful at almost everything in life, why not this too?

Six months of chemotherapy every two weeks was definitely the worst and longest six months of my life. However, I was able to spend more time with my one year old son, grew closer with my family, and had many meaningful visits with friends that I will never forget. Again, there's always a silver lining.

I now 'get' what every other patient of mine with cancer has ever felt. It's life-shattering, brutal and real. But, it can sure make you appreciate how wonderful health is.

I'm now 100% well and will never take life for granted. I am living proof that years of blood cancer research has led to my recovery. This research must continue in order for those effected to reach their goal of life. For this reason, I will be a lifelong supporter of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada, and I will be okay.