

January 2, 2011

Hello, everyone. I first would like to apologize for me taking so long to send this to my dad, so that he could forward it to you. As a lot of you know, it has been a hectic and crazy year for me and my family. Since the holidays are over and the kids are back at school, I am taking this opportunity to TRY and put into words just how much you all have meant to me.

Danny and I have been so overwhelmed and grateful for all of you. I truly cannot begin to describe my feelings. For the ones of you who know me personally, you know that I am quite the stubborn girl ☺ and I am a fighter! I mean, I just did what I had to do...from the very beginning with the biopsy, then the port placement, to having chemo treatments and injections every other week for over a year, taking steroids and other numerous medications, and drinking the 2 bottles of what I like to call "paste" in order to have my CT every 8 weeks, not to mention having 3 surgeries within a 5 month period...all of it was necessary though, to be where I am today.

When I look back on these past 20 months, I realize just how lucky I am to have another year to celebrate birthdays and holidays with my family, another year to watch Connor's and Olivia's smiling faces. That alone is such a gift.

I know DEEP IN MY HEART that I would not have been able to access the medical treatment I received from MD Anderson, nor would I have had the opportunity to become a patient of the incredible Dr. Garrett Walsh (who removed ALL my lung tumors by hand) or been able to have Danny stay with me for BOTH surgeries at MD Anderson, IF IT WAS NOT FOR ALL OF YOU. YOUR INCREDIBLE GENEROSITY ENABLED

ME TO DO THIS and I know that God is proud of each and every one of you for helping me get the best treatment option possible.

I could go on and on, trying to explain my feelings.... but I feel like I would just sound like a broken record or something. I would like to leave you with this:

I have SO MUCH to be thankful for this year. As of last week, I am showing a CLEAR CT (no tumors are seen)!!!!!! It is truly a miracle and the power of prayer has been on our side. I will be enduring "mop up" chemotherapy, which starts on Wednesday, 1/5/11, but I am lucky since it looks like I will only have 4-8 treatments. To me, this means there is an "end" in sight! :) My Oncologist, Dr. Charles Henderson, (who is one of the best Docs EVER) has explained to me that there is an 80% chance the cancer could come back within the first year. Since we have already established that I am one who likes to be "difficult" and "challenge" certain situations... I plan on being in the 20% to where this disease does not come back at all! :)

God Bless all of you. I am sending a BIG, BIG HUG TO EACH AND EVERYONE OF YOU!!!!!!

With Love,

Michelle "Missy" Erbesfield Billingsley