

Julie Stafford Story

Julie has been a PET/CT Technologist since 2007, which means that her job is looking for cancer. She has a family history of breast cancer and her family goes have a history of the genetic mutation of the BRACA 1 gene. Her mother is not a carrier, so she is not either. In May 2015, she gave birth to her third son. While breastfeeding a couple of months later, she found a lump. Due to this being common in breastfeeding mothers, she didn't think much of it but still mentioned it to her doctor in September of the same year. They did an ultrasound. This showed that it was likely not cancerous and that she had one of two options either do a biopsy or do a follow up every 6 months. Since, she did not want to have anything invasive that could hinder breastfeeding, she elected to follow up in 6 months. In February 2016, there was another ultrasound preformed but the lump had changed enough to look suspicious and the doctors wanted to do a biopsy. She was still rather hesitant to do a biopsy. She wanted to wait until she was done breastfeeding, there would be a rather hefty insurance copay, and she was fairly certain that it would be negative. She luckily had a very persistent doctors who recommended they do the biopsy. With the support from her husband she did the test and she tested positive for triple negative breast cancer – an aggressive cancer. She started chemo, had a double mastectomy, a reconstruction, and more chemo. She was 33 when she was diagnosed and had 3 young children at the time. With her work in the cancer section, she does not share her story often but when she does it is only with patients that it would make a positive impact in their lives, to help them have hope. Julie happy, healthy and cancer free.