

AYA

ADOLESCENTS &
YOUNG
ADULTS

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JOYFUL IN HOPE

A reflection by Julia Bayer

Being diagnosed with epithelial ovarian cancer at the age of 26 was not the fertility clinic outcome I was hoping for. My husband and I had been trying for a year and a half when we received this shocking news. The majority of women with this type of cancer are 65 year olds, making my case the youngest Juravinski Hospital had seen. In June 2015 I began three rounds of chemotherapy. A few weeks in, my husband shaved my thick long brown hair. Losing my hair was one of the most difficult steps, because my reflection was now a constant reminder I had cancer.



Unfortunately the chemo was ineffective in shrinking or stopping the cancer from growing. This meant that moving forward, my treatment plan would rely solely on successful operations. On September 9, 2015 I went in for a major abdomen surgery at Princess Margaret Hospital. While the fantastic surgical team was successful in removing all visible cancer, my extensive recovery journey involved adjusting to a very limited digestive system and learning to walk again due to femoral nerve damage. It's fair to say I was quite discouraged at this time. The reality of my situation and the statistics of this type of cancer were daunting.

With the help of dietitians and doctors, I was finally able to stop losing weight (having lost thirty since surgery) and start gaining again! This was a huge encouragement.

My nerve-damaged leg began showing huge improvements after the two month mark. I'm now walking without a walker or cane. A recent CT scan of my abdomen and pelvis shows there is no evidence of cancer since the aggressive surgery. This news brought us unexplainable relief and gratitude. The next step is a major chest surgery to remove cancerous lymph nodes and tumors around my lungs. This will take place in January 2016 at the Toronto General Hospital.

Although this has been the most difficult year of my life, I am thankful. I'm thankful for my incredible husband, loving family and supportive friends. I'm thankful for the health care access and professionals we have in Canada. Ultimately, I'm thankful for the HOPE I have. This is a term I've wrestled with over the past year, but I've come to find that true hope has to be rooted in something bigger than our circumstances. My faith in Jesus throughout this difficult journey has taught me what it means to "*Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*" – **Romans 12:12.**

For updates and personal reflections as I continue to battle epithelial ovarian cancer, I'd be honored if you checked out my blog or sent me an email.

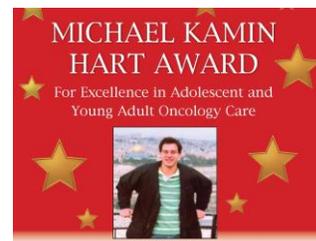
Blog: <http://anchorofmysoulblog.blogspot.ca/>

Email: juliabayer12@gmail.com

MICHAEL KAMIN HART AWARD 2016

Nominate an employee or volunteer at Princess Margaret who has had an *exceptional impact* on the experience and care of an adolescent and young adult (AYA) oncology patient (ages 39 and under). **Nominations are due on Mon, Feb 29 and are accepted from patients and family as well as healthcare providers.**

1. To nominate, describe why this nominee should be recognized for excellence in AYA oncology care, providing examples and reasons (250 to 500 words).
2. Provide your nominee's full name, title, and department and your (nominator's) full name, phone number, address, email, relationship to nominee and if we have your permission to let them know you nominated them.
3. Send it through email to aya@uhn.ca, fax to 416-946-4585 or drop off to the Princess Margaret Management Office on the 16th Floor.



COMMUNITY UPDATES

YOUNG ADULT CANCER CANADA (YACC)

LOCALIFE TORONTO: GAMES EXPEDITION AT RIDDLE ROOM

Join other young adult patients and survivors (ages 18 to 39) for a fun day at **Riddle Room** (579 Yonge Street, 2nd floor, Toronto) on **Saturday, Jan 30** from **11 AM to 2 PM**. RSVP localifetoronto@youngadultcancer.ca for more information or to attend.

RETREAT YOURSELF BC

Registration is now **open!** Meet people who understand what you're going through and connect with them. Retreats offer an opportunity to talk about your experiences, relax, have fun, and share stories with other peers who get it. The retreat will take place from **April 7 to 11, 2016** in British Columbia: <http://bit.ly/1kCkM7j>

DOG SLED EXPEDITIONS FOR TEENS (14-18)

On the Tip of the Toes Foundation is hosting a free dog sled expedition for 12 teens in cancer remission for less than 5 years. It will take place **Feb 27 to Mar 6, 2016**. For more information on applying: <http://bit.ly/1MIYc7G>

Details on the upcoming expedition for young adults ages 19 to 29 will be coming soon.



GILDA'S CLUB TORONTO

RSVP at rvsp@gildasclubtoronto.org or call 416-214-9898 to sign up!

1. 20s and 30s Support Group – Thurs, Jan 14, 28, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

Come us at Gilda's for a safe place to share your thoughts and experiences with cancer as a young adult.

2. Brain Fog: Cancer Related Cognitive Dysfunction – Tues, Jan 19, 12 – 1 PM

This program talks about cognitive changes that some people can experience after cancer treatment. Discussion will take place regarding causes and factors contributing to brain fog as well as practical memory strategies and stress inoculation techniques to help with this.

3. Treatment and Side Effects – Tues, Jan 26, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

This workshop encourages people to discuss side effect management with their healthcare team as well as provides tools to help manage potential side effects.

4. Tired of Feeling Tired? – Wed, Jan 27, 12 – 1:30 PM

Fatigue is the most common symptom experienced by individuals with cancer receiving treatments. Come and learn about what things you can do to help improve this symptom.

