Thank you for joining us for Spotlight, I’m Liz Waid. And I’m Rebekah Schipper. Spotlight uses a special English method of broadcasting. It is easier for people to understand no matter where in the world they live. When Vishal Joshi was 14 years old he started to have problems breathing. Doctors thought that he had asthma, a problem with the lungs. But Vishal became worse. Doctors started to think that Vishal might have tuberculosis, a serious lung disease. Doctors put Vishal in a room alone. They thought other people could also become sick. But Vishal did not improve. Finally the doctors discovered the real problem. The doctors told Vishal that he had cancer. Vishal was not sure what this meant for his life. “I was pretty surprised when I found out I had cancer. You do not know what is going on. Your whole life stops. I missed out on a lot of my growing up. I spent a lot of time in a hospital and missed a lot of school.” Vishal’s story is similar to many other young people who have cancer. Today, Vishal no longer has cancer. He is sharing his story with other young people. Doctors told Vishal that he had Hodgkins Lymphoma. Hodgkins Lymphoma affects a person’s lymphatic system. The lymphatic system is part of the immune system. It helps a person to fight sickness. The lymphatic system is made up of two main parts: vessels and nodes. The vessels are tubes that spread through a person’s body. The nodes are like little balls connected to the vessels. The nodes produce white blood cells, and collect harmful substances. Vishal had lymphomas, cancers of the lypmhatic system, in his neck and near his heart. Doctors said that Vishal had a fifty percent chance of surviving the cancer. He had to have chemotherapy. These treatments would help fight the cancer in his body. But they would also make him feel sick. The treatment made Vishal’s body hurt. Sometimes he lost feeling in his arms and legs. Other times it would make his stomach feel sick. The chemotherapy treatment would sometimes last for eighteen hours. But Vishal’s experience with cancer was more than just a physical battle. He also faced emotional issues. “I wanted to be a pilot when I grew up… But that all had to change. I stopped growing when I started the treatment. Because of my health problems, I could not become a pilot.” Vishal understood that the cancer treatment would make him feel sick. He understood what was happening to his body. But he did not know how it would make him feel emotionally. He was afraid. “It is a really difficult place to be. It would have helped me to read about what other people experienced, if their experience had been positive. On television you hear all the sad stories about people dying. That does not help.” Vishal wanted support. He needed to hear helpful stories about other young people who fought cancer. He felt that other young people’s stories could help him prepare for his future. But Vishal found little information for people his age. Today Vishal no longer has cancer. But when he was going through treatment, he felt alone. He did not want other people his age to feel the same way. So Vishal decided to share his cancer story on a new website. The website, The Spoon Room, helps young people learn about health from people their own age. Doctor Ann McPherson, helped create the Spoon Room website. she talked about how the website helps young people. “Young people talk openly of their fears, their worries, and they talk about how health services have helped them. These are teenagers first and people who have a sickness second.” Doctor McPherson wanted to help create a place where young people could hear about cancer and other health problems from people of the same age. The website presents the experiences of 34 young people. Visitors to the website can read, listen to, or watch the young men’s and women’s stories. The Spoon Room website shows young people talking about cancer. This is where Vishal shared his story. The creators of the website hope to collect more people’s stories. They hope to collect young people’s thoughts on many diseases. The website shares important thoughts that a medical book cannot express. The young people share their emotions. They share their own experiences. The website also presents information about cancer. It tells what words mean, and answers questions that young people often ask. Visitors to the website can also find information about cancer support groups. They can find other groups of people who have experienced cancer. The creators of the Spoon Room website understand that it is important to know about cancer. But they also understand that cancer effects more than people’s bodies. They encourage people with cancer to tell their stories, and talk with other people about their experiences. Have you ever had a serious disease like cancer? Do you know someone else who has? You do not need a website or a support group to share your story. Talking to friends and family about problems like cancer is an easy way to share experiences. Churches are also good places to talk to people. If you have had a disease like cancer, tell other people what it is like. If you know someone with cancer, do not be afraid to talk to them about it. They may be looking for someone to talk to. One of the young people on the Spoon Room website Talked about his friends. His friends had difficulty talking to him after he had cancer. They were afraid of how he would react. But the young man who had cancer said he wanted to talk about it. He wanted to share his cancer story with them. He does not think that people should be afraid to talk about cancer. In fact,he thinks it is important to talk about it with friends. Philip Pullman writes books for children. He thinks that medicine and personal stories are both important. He says that medicine can help our physical bodies, but the stories of others help people with cancer as they experience cancer. “Nature and medical science together can do a great deal to help our bodies and minds heal themselves. But hearing the experiences of other people who have been through the same trouble gives us nourishment. It keeps us going in the mean time.” The writer and producer of this program was Joshua Leo. The voices you heard were from the United States and the United Kingdom. Computer users can hear our programs, read our scripts, and see our word list on our website at http://www.radio.english.net. This program is called “Sharing Cancer Stories”. We love to hear comments and questions from our listeners. If you have a comment or question, you can e-mail us. Our e-mail address is radio @ english .net. We hope you can join us again for the next Spotlight program. Goodbye!