

Health issues are a large concern for most adults. When we are children, teenagers and young adults, we feel invincible. But as we grow older and begin to take on the responsibility of having children of our own we begin to realize how precious and short our time on earth truly is. It seems that instead of more cures and answers to ailments there are more diseases and disorders. One of the disease's that has rocked our community is bone cancer. A beloved member of our community has been diagnosed with this and each of us is trying to cope with it.

We live in a small close knit lake community. Our school is very small there are about fifty children in each grade. The lakes area is so beautiful so most of the teachers live in the community. Everyone seems to know everyone else. We work together, socialize worship and recreate on the lakes together. When something happens to one person we are all affected. One of the most popular girls in our community went away to college and then returned to teach in our school. She also coached the volleyball squad and sang in the church choir. She is one of those people that lights up a room by walking into it. A few months ago she started experiencing pain in her lower back. She joked about this with some of the parents. She said that she must be getting older because she was starting to find it hard to keep up with the volleyball team at practice. After several weeks of seeing her limp at games and in church I asked her how she was doing. She told me that she was going to the doctor the next day to have an MRI done to see if she had torn a ligament. A few days later my daughter came home from school crying. She said that the volleyball coach has bone cancer and that she is not going to get better.

We had a meeting at church that night. When I arrived at the meeting I could tell by the glum expressions on everyone's faces that the news must be true. Our lovely young coach and soloist was dying of bone cancer. One of the members of the committee that was meeting is a doctor. He explained that he was not the coach's doctor but from what he knew about bone cancer is that it starts somewhere else and spreads to the bones. By the time the cancer is to the stage that there is pain, the initial infected area is beyond treatment.

Our coach is still alive, however she is losing strength very quickly. The bone cancer is spreading and limiting the amount of time she can be on her feet. Her courage and grace is teaching all of us a lesson on how fragile and short life is. The children are learning to cope with death at an early age. They are already committing their time to raise money for research for a cure for bone cancer.