



JUST LIKE RIDING A BIKE

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www.storyofmylife.cc/livingwithcancer/

Finding out I was dying of cancer answered many prayers for me. Many in my family died of cancer. I've spent a large part of my life hearing about it, seeing how it changed my loved ones, and all of them died after chemo, radiation, and surgeries.

I made up my mind 30 years ago to never go through all that and have my life reduced to nothing but illness day-in and day-out, not being able to really live out my days on my own terms.

My niece worked for Hospice Compassus for many years and told me to call them. With one phone call, they knew exactly what needed to be done, and a whole team took on the responsibilities of setting everything up for my hospice care. I was amazed at how they all worked for my benefit. Even more than that, they made me feel really cared about as a person, not just as a patient. A hospital setting is so cold, and most of the people you deal with in a hospital are so businesslike and uncaring. Not so with Hospice Compassus. Each one of them is a true angel, and I am blessed to have them.

Intuitively, I knew all the things I needed to get done to ensure an easier time for my family – such as legal paperwork, writing down as many memories now before the cancer makes it impossible to think clearly, and making cassette tapes even though my voice had already changed.

Then it was time to think about what I wanted.

Being on opiates and driving was not safe for me or others so I had to give it up. I found myself stuck in the house more and more. The one thing I was missing most was being around nature where I find myself closer to God than anywhere else. I knew I couldn't walk very far, so I started looking on the internet to find an answer to my problem. I found an adult tricycle. It was perfect.

I sent the trike information to Diane Hasler, a Hospice Compassus social worker and now my great friend. She thought it just might be the answer, too. She went to work ordering it, and then had her son pick it up and deliver it to me. I was so excited I couldn't let myself believe that it would really happen, but sure enough it did. From the minute I sat on the tricycle, I felt different. I felt happy – truly happy.

I had been exercising my legs for a couple of weeks in anticipation of the tricycle arriving, but the first ride was still a very short one. Each day that I could, I took the trike and worked at getting stronger. Finally, I was ready to ride down to my best friend's house. My friend, Cathy, also has cancer. I was terribly worried about her and wanted to see her in person. This is the most important reason for the trike. We needed each other, and cancer had kept us apart with neither of us able to go visit one another. Now, I could go at least every other day to check on her.

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The other day, my housekeeper walked down to see me ride my bike to Cathy's. There had been a commercial on the TV earlier with a pig squealing as he went down the road. As I started going faster and faster down the hill and with the wind in my hair, I yelled out, "Wheeeee!" All of a sudden, I started laughing and laughing. I sounded like the pig. It not only felt great, but also relieved a lot of stress, and I felt more alive than I had in almost a year.

Hospice Compassus certainly fulfilled my dream. In fact, they gave me new memories, a feeling of freedom, fulfilled my need to be with my best friend through her crisis, and most of all, gave me the opportunity to spend time with God.



Barbara Henry riding her adult tricycle provided by Hospice Compassus.

Fulfilling Patients' Bucket List Wishes

