

## ON BEHALF OF ONE VOICE AGAINST CANCER

Dear Senator Patty Murray and Legislative Aide Annie Walden-Newman,

We were so thankful to be able to meet with Annie to encourage the support of the collective message of One Voice Against Cancer (OVAC) on May 24<sup>th</sup> and to share with you our experience with cancer. Although we traveled from different parts of Washington and have quite different experiences, it was comforting, albeit disconcerting to discover unlimited common ground in our passion to ask for you, our voice in the Senate, to hold a strong and determined position in the fight against this disease that is now taking the lives of 1500 Americans daily. Please remember our message, remember us, our futures and our families when you are faced with voting on difficult financial decisions that affect the hope of cancer survivors in our country.



Tessie is a stage 3 breast cancer survivor. She and her three sisters all under 23 are cancer survivors and share a rare genetic based propensity for cancer. They also lost their father to cancer and were subsequently raised by a single mother. Tessie is an amazing and active advocate in her community inspiring young women to be pro-active in cancer prevention and screening and working with The American Cancer Society as a volunteer. She wants to be a Montessori grade school teacher when she finishes college and will be a gift to hundreds of children in Washington State in the coming years. Joshua is 11 and is one of 3 boys that Tessie cares for as a Nanny. He wants you to know that he loves Tessie and wants you to help protect her future and consider the impact your choices today will have on the effects of cancer on society in his future. Your support of the CDC, NIH and NCI will continue to make it possible for her to get the extensive amount of screening and testing needed to

prevent recurrence. Additionally, the screening and prevention programs for cancer in Washington State saved her life.

We are products of our experience. My desire to work with cancer survivors was born through the loss of my beloved father-in-law Jack Swanson to leukemia in 2008. Through a small non-profit in Spokane (Cancer Patient Care) I help to assist financially challenged cancer survivors with social service needs and to access efficacious services that can help them get the most from their medical care and make lifestyle changes. This work inspired me to pursue a master's degree as a marriage and family therapist and cancer survivorship specialist supporting research in post traumatic growth, so that I can most effectively deliver hope to patients and their families in our community struggling with cancer. Your support of cancer research and more efficient FDA drug approval is imperative; I meet individuals daily that are praying for any small hope as they fight aggressive and virulent forms of cancer. Your support of prevention and early detection, the Title VIII Nursing and Patient Navigation programs are vital to the agency I work with and to the future of health care in our country; our clients are poor, often uneducated and minorities, living in rural communities and in challenging conditions. We must all remember the incredible healthcare savings possible in the long run with proper prevention and optimal medical care.

Please remember us, remember our stories when you go to place your votes in the Senate. We are counting on you!

Thanks so much for allowing us to visit with you and share our message on May 24<sup>th</sup>.

Best Regards,

Melanie Morlan MA, LMFTA (Spokane Washington on behalf of OVAC and the LiveSTRONG Foundation)

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*We visited with your offices on May 24<sup>th</sup> to share the message of OVAC. We are 3 voices from Washington State advocating for our families and cancer survivors in our communities.*