A Night of HOPE



Celebrating

LIFE, HOPE, FAITH & COURAGE

AFRICAN CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
www.africancancer.ca

Saturday, June 7th, 2025
Best Western Premiere Hotel
1316 - 33 Street NE, Calgary AB

The Oladele Foundation

It takes **community**



Pfizer Canada strives to profoundly impact the health of Canadians through the discovery, development and delivery of medicines and vaccines.

We believe in supporting the people in the communities where we work and live through our community investment partnerships. We bring essential medicines to the vulnerable and we lend a hand to those in need.

Through our partnerships we offer the possibility of a healthier world.

BIOTECanada MEMBER

INNOVATIVE MEDICINES CANADA

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Program

Picture & Red Carpet	Everyone
Opening Prayers	Dr. Pele Williams
Land Acknowledgment	Ingrid Wasylyshen
Welcome	Bayo Oladele
Caregiving – Children's experience	Video clips - Dumebi Obioha, ACSG Scholarship
Panel Discussion – Survivors Moderator: Adeola Adesemowo	Palaza Ndlovu, Bonginkosi Gwebu (BJ), Chidinma Obioha, Tendai Toriro, Omolara Etti, Rev. David Jayeola
Remarks by the Mayor	Mayor Jyoti Gondek
Speakers	Nikki Fehr – Wellsprings Kent Parlee - RBC
Importance of ACSG	Membership Director – Adeola Adesemowo, ACSG Scholarship

Dinner & ACSG Choir

My story	Harjeet Kaur Theodora Efebomo Abiola Onatola
Keynote Speaker	Jon Cornish
Panel Discussion: Health professionals & community leaders	Mr. Haroun Popoola – NCAC president Dr. Charles Odame-Ankrah - CACC Executive Director Dr. Adepele Williams – Survivor & Caregiver Dr. Arinze Onwumelu – Family Physician Dr. Adeola Olajide – Family physician - Moderator: Pastor Bola Oladosu – Survivor & Mental Health Therapist
Painting unveiling & donation	Lanre Ajayi
Cancer Research & Study Collaborations	Victoria Fajenyo – U of C Igmat Iyiola – U of A
Circle of Hope	Yinka Marcus & Pst Tubosun Sowunmi
Closing remarks, & thank you	Dr. Mathew Ocholi

HOW WE GOT HERE

The Oladele Foundation

2025 AND BEYOND

- Research collaborations
- Board expansion - Fundraising director & committee
- More community awareness
- Increase support services
- Expansion of office space
- Hiring more staff, and more!

2020-2023

- Grants Applications and Funding
- Collaborations with other organizations
- Obtained Charity status
- Increase in membership
- Celebrated Cancer Survivor Day
- Official Launching of The Oladele Foundation
- Hired more staff members
- Board expansion - governance, committees, etc.
- Partnerships with individuals, businesses & corporate organizations

2018-2020

- Spending family resources
- Community and individual donations
- Second Chance Healing Conference
- Incorporated The Oladele Foundation
- Partnered with Caleb Ministries
- Formed African Cancer Support Group under the Oladele Foundation

2016-2017

- Beginning of our challenges/Beginning of Hope
- Started the Turkey Drive
- Started Personal Community Support
- Co-Authored a Book:
- Second Chance: Surviving the Battles of Cancer
- Spending family resources

ABOUT US

WHO WE ARE

The Oladele Foundation, a charitable, non-profit organization based in Calgary, Alberta, through the African Cancer Support Group (ACSG), supports cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers of African descent and others. We aim to reduce the number of Black Canadians dying of cancer by supporting those going through the cancer journey mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and materially. Studies have shown that Black people are more likely to die from cancer than White people. (DeSantis et al., 2019). The stigma associated with discussing the disease in the community and the systemic barriers and inequities in the health system sometimes make cancer patients and their caregivers suffer in silence. In 2018, Mrs. Yinka Oladele, and Mrs. Florence Omara, attended a peer support training organized by the Canadian Cancer Society and then formed the African Cancer Support Group (ACSG).

Currently the Oladele Foundation bridges the gap between the hospital, the community and the patients and operates under three arms :

Second Chance Healing Conference

Annual gathering of faith leaders to serve members requiring spiritual and faith-based support.

Annual Turkey Meal Drive

Supports members during festive periods by providing a whole turkey meal for the family

African Cancer Support Group

A safe space for members to access support in a group setting. Members are at various stages in their cancer journey from diagnosis, active treatment, and remission to survivors, and community awareness.

WHAT DRIVES US?

Providing hope for cancer survivors, patients, and caregivers

OUR VISION

To reduce the number of Africans dying of cancer through education, awareness, and de-stigmatization. To provide support, comfort and relief to Africans and caregivers, and demystify cancer within the African community by empowering individuals to speak up.

OUR MISSION

To create a society where Africans no longer suffer in silence or feel stigmatized when going through any stage of cancer and cancer care.

OUR PURPOSE

We exist to provide care and foster a community where Africans going through cancer, can receive mental, emotional, physical, financial, educational, and social support.

OUR VALUES

- Trust
- Respect
- Confidentiality
- Empathy
- Compassion

OUR PROMISE

To build a community that provides unwavering support to African cancer patients, survivors, caregivers, and their families. We aim to deliver comprehensive assistance that encompasses mental, emotional, physical, financial, educational, and social support.



PARTNER WITH US

Your partnership can make a difference for African Cancer patients and their families.

Join us in the fight to bridge the gap and support cancer patients and survivors within the African community. Your partnership and donation can help us destigmatize cancer, alleviate the uncertainty it brings, cover operational costs, raise awareness, and provide essential support and services to our members.

Program Sponsorship: Partner with us to sponsor one of our cancer support programs.

Event Sponsorship: Support our fundraising events and activities.

Education Sponsorship: For cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers to learn more about the disease and how to manage its impact on their lives.

Corporate Partnership: Partner with us as a corporate sponsor, and work with us.

In-kind Donations: Marketing services, or technology, to help us offset operational costs and focus more resources on supporting our programs.

Matching Gifts: Inspire your employees to give by offering to match their donations. or through Benevity.

Legacy Giving: Consider making a lasting impact by including our foundation in your estate planning.

Volunteerism: Consider donating your time and expertise to help us achieve our mission.

Community Partnerships: Partner with us to raise awareness of cancer and its impact on the African community in Canada.

Research Sponsorship: Support our efforts to fund research projects that focus on cancer in the African community.

Ways to donate

1. Online: www.oladele.ca/donation

2. Via email money transfer:
secondchance@oladele.ca

3. By cheque: Payable to
The Oladele Foundation
235, 3545-32 Ave NE, Unit 906
Calgary AB T1Y 6M6

SCAN



DONATE

The Oladele Foundation

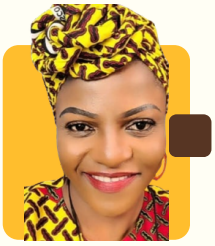
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Bayo Oladele
President & Co-Founder
IT Security Specialist



Florence Omara
V. President & Co-Founder
Social Worker



Zita Tangwa
Health & Wellness Ambassador
Secretary



Patrick Njapa
Programs Director
Certified Mindset Consultant



Kemi Aderibigbe
Director
Human Services Sector



Ayo Gbadeyan
Policy & Strategy Director
Senior IT Audit Manager



Ola Oladele
Finance Director & Co-Founder
Accountant, CGA, CPA



Fatou Diouf
Community Engagement
Director



Rifat Khandokar
Communication Director
Graphic Designer/Library Tech



Dr. Matthew Ocholi
Board Member/Advisory
Project Manager



Adeola Adesemowo
Membership Director

OPERATIONS



Yinka Oladele
Executive Director/Co-Founder
& Entrepreneur



Opeyemi Oyefeso
Operations Manager
- Volunteer



Gidey Gebrezgabher
Admin/Operations Assistant



Abimbola Adewole
Admin/Program Coordinator

MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER OF ALBERTA

On behalf of the Government of Alberta, it is my pleasure to send greetings to everyone attending A Night of Hope in honour of cancer survivors, warriors and their caregivers and families.

More than 20,000 Albertans face a cancer diagnosis each year. While our government continues to pave the way for better health outcomes, we know the impact of cancer can be felt everywhere. And no one understands the reality of that fight better than all of you.

I am inspired by your courage, and by your determination to come together to support one another and promote education and awareness in the Black community. Every Albertan dealing with cancer, or any other health challenge, deserves to have access to a network of support that reflects who they are and makes them feel at home. I deeply appreciate Bayo and Yinka Oladele's efforts to give back to others through the African Cancer Support Group, to empower and offer hope to individuals whose lives have been touched by this awful disease.

As you pay tribute at this event to the strength and resilience of cancer survivors and their caregivers, I trust you will be encouraged by the love and understanding of your community and the hope you all share for the future.

Best wishes,

Honourable Danielle Smith, Premier of Alberta



Calgary

Jyoti Gondek, Mayor

PROCLAMATION

National Cancer Survivors Day recognizes the many people in our community living with cancer, including those who have been recently diagnosed, and those in remission. The day is a celebration of the people who inspire us with their stories of courage and resolve in their fight against cancer, and the family and friends who support them along the way.

Whereas: Anyone living with a history of cancer - from the moment of diagnosis through the remainder of life - is a cancer survivor;

Whereas: With over 247,100 new cancer diagnoses predicted for Canada this year, increased access to quality cancer care, screening, and prevention must be a top priority;

Whereas: Calgarians are invited to mark the strength and resilience of cancer survivors and be reminded that we can all work together to beat this terrible disease.

On behalf of City Council and Calgarians, I hereby proclaim June 1, 2025 as:

"NATIONAL CANCER SURVIVORS DAY"

JYOTI GONDEK
MAYOR

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
THE CITY OF CALGARY

City Hall, 800 Macleod Trail S.E. | Calgary, AB, Canada T2P 2M5 | P.O. Box 2100, Station M, #8069 | Calgary, AB, Canada T2P 2M5
T 403.268.5622 | F 403.268.8130 | themayor@calgary.ca

Welcome Address
2025 CANCER SURVIVORS DAY!
By The President, The Oladele Foundation



Good evening

On behalf of the members of the board of directors, members of the African Cancer Support Group, ACSG, the Staff and Volunteers of the The Oladele Foundation. I like to welcome you all to tonight's celebration of Hope, resilience, perseverance and Life - the 2025 Cancer Survivors Day.

This is our 4th annual celebration Day and we want to spoil you a little! Each year we try to incorporate something new and different to enhance your experience and make the celebration more colorful. Two years ago we introduced the survivors discussion panel and it proved to be very informative and popular. Last year we brought in the children of survivors and gave them voice, forum and opportunity to be heard, and then the declaration of June 2 as survivors day in Calgary by our Honourable Mayor Jyoti Gondek.

After organizing this event free of charge for three years, we are experimenting with the concept of Social Enterprise this year with the introduction of entry tickets and table sales. We're hoping to improve our chances of realizing the amount we need to raise. So indirectly many of you have already contributed to our fund raising, thank you. But that is only the beginning!

Each year we had a target amount we wanted to raise. Unfortunately, we have never succeeded in reaching our intended targets. We are believing and trusting everyone that one day, like today, we'll be able to realize our target goal.

This year, our target is $50,000.00 only. This is part of the money we need to do what Funders and Grantors would not directly support like staff and volunteers pay, like rent and utilities the essential need of every charitable organization.

I am calling upon you to rise up to our aid and help us raise this fund to support our staff and utilities, to continue our good work in our community, because you believe in our course – Reducing the number of US, people of African Origin dying from cancer each day!

I like to take this opportunity to thank all our present and future funders, donors and grantors, and to ask you not to be weary, for there is still much more to be done. Those who have been supporting us from the beginning and those who recently joined us or recently started helping and supporting us, thank you. Individual members of our communities who have supported us with small and large sums of money, private funders and donors, small, medium and large organizations including Calgary Foundation, City of Calgary, the province of Alberta, the Government of Canada, RBC, Pfizer, Suncor (Petro Canada Care maker), Myeloma Canada and many many more individuals and corporations. Thank you.

I would like to express our gratitude to our keynote speaker, Chancellor Jon Cornish, the chancellor of the University of Calgary. Thank you for accepting our invitation.

To our special guests: government officials, political leaders, community leaders and religious leaders, thank you for your presence. These are a practical demonstration of your commitment to our work. Thank you.

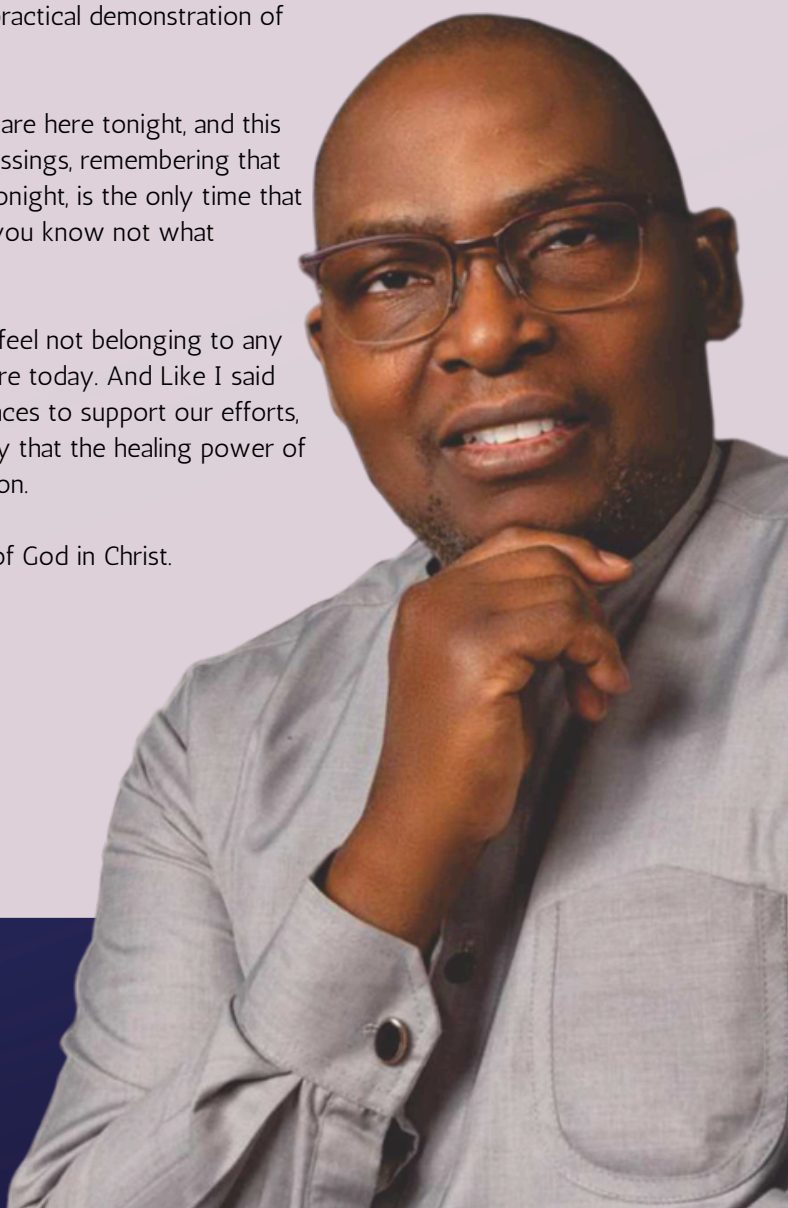
To our members, the survivors, you are the reason why we are here tonight, and this night belongs to you. My advice to you is to count your blessings, remembering that yesterday is history, tomorrow is the future, and today, or tonight, is the only time that belongs to you. You cannot undo what you did yesterday, you know not what tomorrow holds, but today belongs to you. Use it wisely.

And to everyone else, young and old, male and female who feel not belonging to any one of the groups mentioned above, thank you for being here today. And Like I said before, you left your homes, you came from far and near places to support our efforts, thank you for your commitment we appreciate you and pray that the healing power of God upon your lives will bring everything in you to perfection.

I invite you to enjoy yourselves eat and drink to the glory of God in Christ.

Best Regards,

Bayo Oladele



FROM THE DESK OF
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends, Partners, and Supporters,

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with both pride and humility at the progress we've made, the lives touched, and the resilience our community continues to show in the face of adversity.

The Oladele Foundation was born out of lived experience, shaped by a deep understanding of the emotional, physical, and cultural burdens cancer places on families, particularly within African and immigrant communities. From the onset, we have walked alongside individuals and families affected by cancer with compassion and dignity, and provided culturally relevant support and care.

As a community, we have:

- Provided psychosocial and mental health support to dozens of patients, caregivers, and survivors.
- Delivered meals, groceries, and housekeeping support to families overwhelmed by treatment and caregiving duties.
- Hosted workshops, wellness activities, and healing spaces that empower our community with knowledge and support.
- Collaborated with individuals, businesses, organizations, institutions, while continuing to provide necessary support.
- And today, we are launching scholarship initiatives to support the children of cancer patients and survivors—because the ripple effects of illness must never rob our young ones of hope.

Still, this journey has not been without challenges. Fundraising remains a significant challenge as we strive to expand our services to meet the increasing needs. The economic climate has impacted donations, and yet, the calls for help continue to increase. But where challenges arise, we see opportunity. We are actively working to diversify our funding sources by applying for strategic grants and engaging with corporate and community partners who share our vision.

Looking ahead, our focus is on expansion and sustainability. This includes:

- Growing our team of professional counsellors and peer support volunteers.
- Increasing culturally relevant programming that speaks directly to the unique needs of Black and African communities facing cancer.
- Launching the **Caregiver Support Group**, providing essential resources and a strong community for those who dedicate themselves to caring for others.
- Deepening our advocacy and research arm to ensure our voices are heard at the policy level.
- Investing in technology to streamline service delivery and improve accessibility for those facing isolation or mobility issues.

To every donor, partner, volunteer, and community member—thank you. Your belief in our mission has helped ease burdens, uplift spirits, and save lives. Together, we are not just providing support—we are building a movement of care, hope, and healing.

With heartfelt gratitude

Yinka Oladele

Executive Director





CHANCELLOR JONATHAN MICHAEL SEETAL CORNISH, CFA,

Chancellor Jonathan Michael Seetal Cornish, CFA, combines athletic excellence with financial acumen as an Investment Advisor at RBC Dominion Securities. The Canadian Football Hall of Famer and 2013 Lou Marsh Trophy winner led a legendary nine-year career with the Calgary Stampeders before making history as the University of Calgary's youngest Chancellor.

Founder of the Calgary Black Chambers, which has raised nearly $1 million for community initiatives, Cornish's impact extends beyond sports and finance. His royal honors include the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal and King Charles III Coronation Medal. A sought-after keynote speaker, he regularly addresses major corporations and chairs prominent community events across Canada.

The Jon Cornish Trophy, awarded to Canada's top NCAA football player, stands as a testament to his lasting influence in athletics, while his CFA designation exemplifies his commitment to excellence in wealth management. Jon is a Calgary Top 40 under 40 recipient.

Jon Cornish

NIKI FEHR



Niki Fehr is the Program Director at Wellspring Alberta. She is an inclusive leader committed to community building and evidence-informed programming for people living with cancer. She is also a young adult cancer survivor herself.

She brings a Masters of Arts in International Peacebuilding from University of Notre Dame and extensive international work experience, including Northern Uganda, Northern Ireland, and Alaska. She specialized in creating safe spaces for people who have experienced trauma.
Niki has been in non-profit leadership for over 15 years.

KENT PARLEE







- Kent has been married to Cheryl for 41 years, they will celebrate their 42nd wedding anniversary in August
- They have 3 wonderful adult children all of whom are married and they have 2 amazing grandchildren
- Kent and Cheryl enjoy travelling, camping with their family and weekend brunches and games nights with family
- Kent and Cheryl have been active volunteers in the many communities they have lived and worked in over the course of the last 42 years, serving in various capacities on numerous boards and committees
- In 2006, at age 42, Kent was diagnosed with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL), with treatment ultimately culminating in a blood stem cell transplant in 2011, he will share more of his journey with us shortly

Kent Parlee

PANEL DISCUSSION: HEALTH PROFESSIONALS & COMMUNITY LEADERS



Dr. Charles Odame-Ankrah - Scientist, Executive Director CA

Dr. Charles Odame-Ankrah is a scientist, innovator, and community leader dedicated to advancing equity and environmental solutions. As Executive Director of the Calgary African Community Collective (CACC), he leads initiatives that drive systemic change and grassroots empowerment. A specialist in air quality monitoring, he has developed patented technologies for nitrogen dioxide detection and new novel environmental instrumentation. Dr. Odame-Ankrah previously served on Alberta's Anti-Racism Advisory Council and played a key role in creating Ghana House in Calgary. He bridges science, advocacy, and community impact with passion and purpose.



Dr. Adeola Olajide - Family Physician

Dr Adeola Olajide brings wealth of experience in core clinical medicine with interests in women's health, mental health and Long term care.

She is a trained GP with MRCGP from the United Kingdom. She has over 18 yrs clinical experience since graduating medical school in 2008. She has a MSc in Public Health from LSHTM/ University of London and also has a Diploma in women's health (DRCOG) from the United Kingdom.

She is married and a mum to 3 lovely children. She loves entertaining/hosting family/friends and enjoys biking in her spare time.



Dr. Arinze (Dr. Zo) - Family Physician

Dr. Arinze is the Clinical Director of Deer Ridge Family Clinic and a dedicated physician serving multiple nursing homes in Calgary. He earned his MBBS from the University of Nigeria in 1998, followed by a general surgery residency in Ireland and a family medicine residency in Scotland. With board certifications from Ireland, the UK, and Canada, he brings extensive expertise to his practice. Beyond medicine, he holds an MBA from the University of Dublin and postgraduate diplomas in tropical and musculoskeletal medicine. His commitment to patient care and advanced medical training continues to make a meaningful impact in the healthcare community



Haroun Popoola - NCAC President & Community Leader

Haruna Popoola is the current president of the Nigerian Canadian Association of Calgary (NCAC), bringing decades of leadership and service to the community. Previously, he served as Vice President of NCAC, President of the Yoruba Foundation Calgary, and Chairman of the Nigerian Canadian Muslim Congregation of Calgary, offering strategic direction and governance oversight. His volunteer journey spans nearly 35 years, beginning with student leadership in Nigeria. Since moving to Calgary in 2008, he has continued to contribute, working at the City of Calgary in IT leadership and supporting diversity, inclusion, and mentorship initiatives. He also leads business ventures in logistics, real estate, and engineering.



Dr. Pele Williams - Survivor & Caregiver

Pelé Williams is a cancer survivor whose faith in God has been an anchor in life. From the moment of her diagnosis, Pele realized that both faith and fear comes through what she hears and believes. By turning to prayer, scripture, and her faith community for support, Pelé continues to find strength, courage and hope to overcome trials. Today , she is committed to encouraging others by sharing her story, and reminding others that no one should go through life without faith in God.

Pele is an IT leader by profession. She has been married to her college sweetheart for 21 years, and they have raised two amazing young men . Pelé is in her happy place when she's listening to a really good book and sipping a cup of tea.



Pastor 'Bola Oladosu - Moderator

(Pastor B) is an Associate Pastor with the Redeemed Christian Church of God, serving since 1993. She leads Evangelism and Outreach at House of Praise Parish and is active in marriage ministry. A former Geologist and Petroleum Engineer, she holds a Theology diploma and degrees in Clinical Social Work. Pastor B works as a Mental Health Therapist and runs AllMyLife – AGAPE Wise Counsel. A two-time cancer survivor, she supports others through her nonprofit, AGAPE AllOurLives Ministries, blending faith, resilience, and therapy. She is married to Pastor Mike Oladosu, with three children and many spiritual sons and daughters.



OLUYINKA MARCUS

Life goes on

The rude shock of my diagnosis came during what I considered the prime season of my life. It was deeply upsetting. I asked God why... and He helped me. I compiled personalized scriptures to read every day, which I titled The Place of Praise. I refer to it as my Prayer Meds. It helped me become more grounded in my faith, reminding me that God is my healer and that His Word is powerful to save. I read through it several times a day and sang praises to God, my Creator. Over the years, I've shared my Prayer Meds with many people.

A few months after completing my treatments, I began visiting specific cancer patients in the cancer unit—always by referral. It became a regular activity in the years that followed. I could feel their joy after we shared experiences and prayed together.

As a counselling psychotherapist, I also learned how to support cancer patients through their journey. For instance, engaging in grief work became an essential part of the healing process. Grieving the initial shock is the first step—it's quite traumatic for anyone to receive such devastating news. The impact of this trauma can generate overwhelming thoughts and emotions that must be effectively processed.

In addition to the emotional shock, patients also grieve physical losses such as hair loss, nail discoloration, and fatigue experienced during treatment. Intentionally grieving these losses is important for achieving an improved state of mind, clearer thought processes, and a return to peace and joy—even amid harsh treatments. This process is vital because cancer treatment can lead to significant depression. Many experience fear, anxiety about their future and relationships, and periods of emotional distress.

Since 2007, I've engaged in many healthy activities that support my overall well-being. I identified specific spirit-lifting practices that I do daily to elevate my mood. I was strongly advised to continue these activities as much as possible, and I have committed to doing so for the rest of my life. I'm happy to embrace this lifestyle.

For instance, I've discovered that building a network of supportive relationships helps me thrive. Connecting with others regularly is vital to my emotional well-being. One of such groups is ACSG, of which I am a member. Some of the key activities I engage in include:

1. **Consistent and intentional physical movement – Activities such as dancing (Zumba), swimming, simple cardio exercises, walking, and some weightlifting.**
2. **Eating well and maintaining sleep hygiene – This includes reducing my intake of sugar and dairy products.**
3. **Avoiding stressors – Steering clear of situations and triggers that could lead to mental or physical complications.**
4. **Emotional regulation – Expressing emotions in healthy ways, avoiding prolonged anger, and letting go of resentment toward others.**
5. **Talking to my therapist – This is very important to me for emotional support and stability.**
6. **Doctor's visits – Regular check-ups, including mammograms and ultrasounds (when necessary), are some of the most important steps I take toward maintaining my health.**
7. **Giving back to the community – Community service brings me a deep sense of fulfillment. One example is supporting others who are going through cancer treatments, helping them with emotional regulation and stability. Giving back also enhances our sense of belonging.**

A cancer diagnosis is not a death sentence; however, it can be a very lonely journey—regardless of how many people you have around you. That's why getting together regularly with like-minded individuals is a powerful way to overcome overwhelming emotions and feelings of isolation. Staying spiritually connected, emotionally supported, and physically active has transformed not only my healing journey but also my daily experience of life.



HELP US RAISE

$50,000.00

SCAN ME

Purpose of the $50,000 Fundraising Campaign

- Direct Patient & Family Support
- Mental Health & Counseling Services
- Education & Awareness Programs
- Wellness & Complementary Therapies
- Back to School Supplies



The Oladele Foundation
235, 3545-32 Ave NE, Unit 906
Calgary AB T1Y 6M6

E-transfer:
secondchance@oladele.ca

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

I am Thriving in love because of the love and caring support received through the African Cancer Society Group Members, and other macro parts of my community.



MY JOURNEY AS A BREAST CANCER SURVIVOR

My name is Sharon Folkes-Hall, and I am a three-year Breast Cancer, Strength Survivor. Remembering March 2021, I was stone cold and speechless while hearing the doctor talking; I remained still, sitting without saying one word, as if there was a three-pound rock stuck inside of my throat. I had to ask the doctor to repeat the report once more, as I was spaced out at first. The doctor was very understanding and told me again, "Miss Folkes-Hall, your breast examination result shows a 2.5-centimeter malignant tumor in your right breast." In the spirt of kind, caring love, I say to anyone going through any form of cancer diagnoses and treatments, "NEVER THINK YOU ARE ALONE! You have your GOD/ Devine ONE, and Us to be by your side."

Moving into real time, 2025, I am happy to say because you all stood up for me with great, needed supports, I have removed my awkward Breast Cancer difficulty situations and make a new, natural life awareness, meaning that by the powers that are spiritual to me, I have in cooperate a healthier, passionate lifestyle. And, in honoring my breast cancer arduous task, I am proud to share that I got back on my feet, went back to complete my Master of Social Work Graduate Program at Toronto Metropolitan University, where I will be graduating October of this year. Thank you Sista Yinka, Brother Baya, and the other ACSG family, always Love from my Heart to yours truly. Again, thank you ACSG Members and the rest of my community people for all you are doing, as you make me motivated to do more of my best.



2 YEARS LATER: MY JOURNEY WITH BREAST CANCER

Omolara ETTI

Two years ago, I heard the words that changed my life: “You have breast cancer.” My world stopped.

Since then, it's been a rollercoaster... of pain, courage, faith, and growth. When I was diagnosed with cancer, I was one year into my diploma program, fully focused on building the future I had always dreamed of. In an instant, everything changed. My plans, my routine, and my sense of security were all thrown into uncertainty. I didn’t just fear the illness itself; I feared what it meant for my life. I worried about how others would see me. Would people treat me differently? Would I lose the progress I had worked so hard for? These thoughts weighed heavily on me.

One thing I learned quickly is that cancer comes with more than just physical challenges. There’s an emotional weight and a social stigma that many people don’t talk about. I realized how important it is to speak openly about these experiences and to remind others that a diagnosis doesn’t define who you are. Illness is not something to be ashamed of. It doesn’t erase your dreams or your worth.

Throughout my treatment, I was surrounded by incredible support. My family stood by me with love and patience. My healthcare team cared for me with dedication,i got courage from the ACGS members who have fought and won the battle over cancer. There were hard days when I was exhausted and discouraged, but their support reminded me that I wasn’t facing this alone.

As I recovered, I found the strength to return to my studies. Balancing school and healing wasn’t easy, but each step forward gave me back a sense of control and purpose. Finishing my diploma meant so much more to me than just completing a program. It was proof that cancer didn’t have the final say in my life. It showed me that with determination, hope, and support, it’s possible to move forward and achieve what matters to you. God came through for me in so many ways on this journey through healing, provision, and strength I didn’t know I had. And I know God is not done with me. I’m sharing my story because I want others to know that life after cancer is possible. It’s okay to feel scared, it’s okay to ask for help, and it’s okay to take things one day at a time. You are not alone, and you do not have to carry the weight of stigma. Healing is possible. Thriving is possible. And your dreams are still within



Today, I’m alive. I’m thriving. I’m healing.

To every woman fighting right now: I see you. You are not alone. There is hope.

To those who’ve supported me: Thank you for walking this journey with me.

Omolara Etti

Twins of Mrs. Modupe Obilana



Nifemi Taiwo Osagie

Hello, my name is Oluwaferanmi Osagie. In 2014/2015, when my sister and I were about 9 years old, my mother was first diagnosed with leukemia. It all began on a school morning when my mom suddenly blacked out. My dad dropped us off at school and then rushed her to get checked out. That's when she received the diagnosis. As a child, I didn't quite understand what was happening. Shortly after, we had to move in with my aunt for a few months because my dad had to work daily to cover the bills, while our mother stayed in the hospital undergoing chemotherapy.

I vividly remember visiting the hospital, wearing full PPE to see her, and calling her every single day. I recall how weak she looked—unable to speak, with soft, fragile skin and darkened complexion. Her hair had fallen out from the treatment. My sister and I would constantly ask when she was coming home, and the answer was always, "soon." The more we asked, the longer the wait seemed, until one day it finally happened—she came home. We soon moved to another city, which felt like a fresh start after such a long, painful season.

For the next four years, she regularly went for blood work and check-ups. She gradually rebuilt her strength and was genuinely happy again. I was always curious and asked questions about her blood work. She would reassure us, saying, "It's good when the blood work clinic doesn't call back. That means I'm okay." Life felt normal again, until one day, during a routine test, the clinic called.

I remember sitting at the dining table when her phone rang. My mom picked up and said with confusion, "The blood work clinic?" My sister and I immediately froze. We overheard the woman on the line asking if my mom was sitting down, and right then, we knew something was wrong. The call confirmed our worst fear—the cancer had returned. My sister and I cried harder than we ever had before.

Despite the news, my mom stayed strong for us. She didn't shed a tear in front of us, trying her best to keep us from being afraid. The very next day, we started packing to move back in with our aunt, just as we had years before. We moved a day before my sister and I turned 15. The first few days were unbearable. Our world had fallen apart once again. We kept in touch with her, calling every morning, afternoon, and night. She always smiled when she answered, even through the pain. I believe she did that to ease our fears, and for a while, it worked.

This time around was much harder. School was online due to COVID-19, and with the hospital restricting visitors, we couldn't even see our mom in person. We had a better understanding of her condition now, and that made it scarier. A few months passed, and eventually, she was able to come home occasionally for a week at a time before returning to the hospital. During those visits, she was very weak—her voice trembled, she needed help going up stairs, standing, and even eating.

Soon, my mom—now in remission—was scheduled for a bone marrow transplant. My sister and I were tested as potential donors and went through multiple hospital visits to ensure it would be safe. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, neither of us could proceed with the donation. Thankfully, our older brother was able to donate his bone marrow, and we will never forget the day she received the transplant—it was one of the happiest days of our lives.

After the transplant, she was finally able to come home for good. Having her back with us was both a blessing and a challenge. My sister and I helped care for her—administering medications, preparing her meals, and taking walks with her to help her regain mobility. No matter how tough things got, we were grateful. Our prayers had been answered. Seeing her regain her strength was the greatest reward, and today, my mother stands as a living testimony of what God can do for those He loves.



FERANMI KENNY OSAGIE

Thriving After Cervical Cancer: MY NEW CHAPTER

Palaza Ndlovu

Coming out on the other side of a cervical cancer diagnosis—stage 3C1—was something I never imagined would be part of my story. But here I am, not just surviving, but thriving. The journey was anything but not easy. Treatments tested my limits, physically and emotionally. But now, back at work and reclaiming my independence, I'm learning to live again—with strength, purpose, and grace.

Though my body carries the marks of what I've been through, I am grateful for each day. Every three months, I receive cortisone injections in both arms to manage chronic pain and inflammation—a reminder that healing is not linear, and that survivorship comes with its own battles. But I face them with a spirit that refuses to give up.

I haven't done this alone. The African Cancer Support Group has been a lifeline—offering not just practical help with cleaning, food, and groceries, but also emotional grounding. Therapy has helped me process the trauma and rediscover myself beyond the illness. These layers of support have been crucial in helping me rebuild my life with dignity and hope.

Jabu – My Seven-Year-Old Pillar

When I was at my weakest—fighting for my life against cancer—it was my son, Jabu, who gave me the strength to keep going. Just seven years old, yet he carried a presence so powerful that it anchored me through the storm.

Every morning, no matter how exhausted or sick I felt, I woke up to shower him. It wasn't just a routine—it was a ritual of love, a declaration that I was still his mother, still present, still fighting. Even when Mrs. Oladele gently reminded me, "Your son is old enough to bathe himself," I couldn't let go of that moment. It wasn't about what Jabu could do—it was about what I needed to do. That daily act was a promise to both of us: I am still here, and I will do everything in my power to stay.



Jabu didn't have to say much—his quiet presence, his warm hugs, his innocent questions, and even his laughter were enough. He became the reason I refused to give in. I wanted to see him grow, guide him through life, and be there for every one of his milestones. He was my heartbeat, my light on the darkest days, and my reminder that I still had a purpose far greater than my pain.

I lived for Jabu. I endured for Jabu. And every day, I thank God for giving me a reason so pure and powerful to hold on.

Never Alone – The People Who Walked With Me

Cancer is a lonely journey, but I was never truly alone. Behind me, beside me, and sometimes even carrying me, were the incredible people who became my strength when I had none left of my own—my family, friends, and colleagues.

My family became my refuge. They held me when I cried, prayed when I couldn't find the words, and made sure I never faced a single day without love. Their presence wrapped around me like a blanket, warm and unshakeable, reminding me that I was never fighting just for myself—I was fighting for us.

My friends showed up in ways I never expected. They brought food, comfort, laughter, and sometimes just silence and understanding. They stayed even when things got uncomfortable. They let me be vulnerable, messy, scared—and loved me anyway. Their loyalty was a light in the darkness.

My colleagues became more than just coworkers; they became my cheerleaders, my cover when I couldn't show up, and my reminder that life was still moving forward. They sent messages, checked in, offered flexibility and compassion—and reminded me that my identity was not lost to illness.

Each of these people walked the road with me, step by step, prayer by prayer, day by day. They carried hope when I couldn't find it and helped me hold on to life when everything in me wanted to let go.

To every single person who stood with me—I carry your love in my healing. You helped me survive, and I will never forget it.

Faith now means more than just believing; it's about living with intention, treating others with kindness, and finding strength in forgiveness. My spiritual practices have expanded to include meditation, journaling, and moments of quiet reflection. These practices help me stay connected to my inner self and the divine presence that carried me through my battle.

Each day I get up and go to work, I feel a sense of victory. Not because everything is perfect, but because I am still here—still standing. I've learned to pace myself, to rest when I need to, and to accept help when it's offered. Thriving, for me, means honoring my body, acknowledging my journey, and walking forward with courage.

To everyone reading these words: your journey, whatever it may be, has meaning. Your struggles have purpose. And your story, like mine, has the power to light the way for others. As I continue writing new chapters in my life, I do so with deep gratitude for each moment, knowing that every experience including even the most difficult one has shaped me into who I am today.

Life after cancer isn't about getting back to normal; it's about creating a new normal enriched by wisdom, deepened by gratitude, and strengthened by purpose. This is the greatest lesson of all is that every ending can become a beautiful beginning if we have the courage to turn the page.
"Cancer may take away some things, but it cannot take away the love, laughter, and memories that truly matters." " Unknown

Palaza Ndlovu



DR. ARCHANGEL LEVI OMARA OPYENE

I was first diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2002 while I was working in the Department of Microbiology and Pathology at the College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Florida. During the Easter holidays, I visited my family, and the first symptom I noticed was a painless erectile dysfunction. Concerned, I made an appointment to see my family doctor the following day. During the visit, I explained the issue, which I had never experienced before. My doctor ordered a PSA (Prostate-Specific Antigen) test, and the results showed a PSA level of 4.0.

My doctor explained that a PSA level of 4.0 indicated a possible early case of prostate cancer. I was referred to another lab for a prostate biopsy to confirm the diagnosis. The histopathological results confirmed that I had prostate cancer at stage 4. I was then given the option to choose a treatment method. At that time, the primary treatment option offered at Tom Baker Cancer Centre was surgical removal of the prostate. I returned to the U.S. and consulted my family doctor, who referred me to an Associate Professor of Surgery at the College of Medicine, University of Florida. He had been performing iodine radiation therapy for over 10 years, though he never shared his success rate.

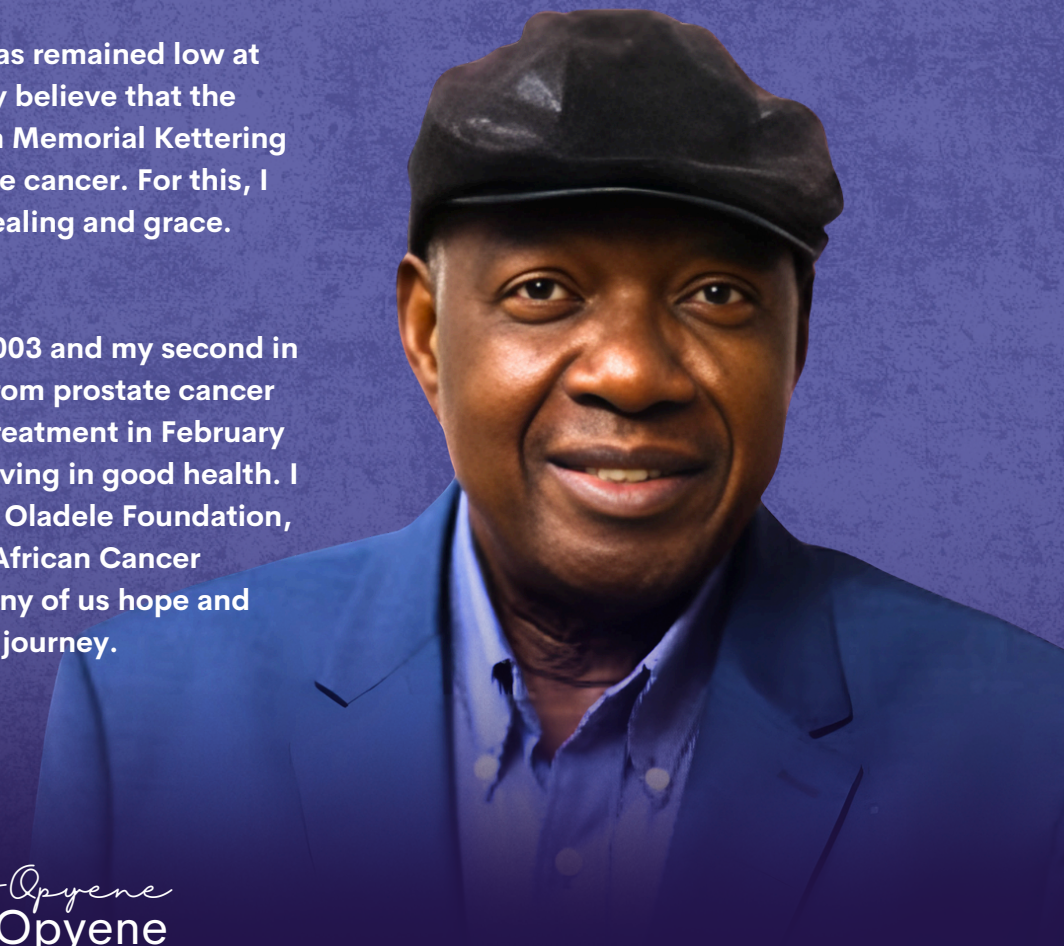
In March 2003, I began a new position as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the College of Medicine, University of Florida. On December 17, 2003, I received iodine radiation treatment administered by the Associate Professor. I continued to work in the Department of Pathology until June 2006, during which time I regularly monitored my PSA levels every six months. Initially, my PSA dropped to 0.5 and then gradually began to rise again.

I later accepted a position as a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Surgery and Clinical Science at the University of Florida in Jacksonville. At that point, my PSA had risen to 2.5, which was still considered within the normal range. However, by the time my contract ended in 2009, my PSA was approaching 4.0 again. This led me to begin exploring alternate treatments with my colleagues. Unfortunately, I was laid off in October 2009 due to the recession in the U.S., though I was placed on Employment Insurance (EI).

My colleagues advised me to seek treatment at the renowned Sloan Memorial Kettering Hospital in New York City. In October 2010, I visited the hospital, and tests revealed that my PSA had surged to 14.9. The medical team decided to administer 125 Gy of palladium radiation after six months of hormonal therapy. On January 17, 2011, I underwent the full palladium treatment combined with hormonal therapy. Following this, my PSA became undetectable and, after the hormonal therapy was discontinued, it gradually rose but stayed low—hovering around 0.01 to 0.02.

As of March 2023, my PSA has remained low at 0.03 or even lower. I strongly believe that the treatment I received at Sloan Memorial Kettering Hospital cured me of prostate cancer. For this, I give thanks to God for His healing and grace.

Fast Forward to.....2025
Since my first diagnosis in 2003 and my second in 2011, I have remained free from prostate cancer following my last radiation treatment in February 2011. I am feeling well and living in good health. I am especially grateful to the Oladele Foundation, whose support through the African Cancer Support Group has given many of us hope and encouragement through our journey.



Dr A.L Omara-Opyene
Dr A.L Omara-Opyene



FLORENCE **OMARA**

My name is Florence Omara, and I am a breast cancer survivor. I was diagnosed in August 2017 after a routine check-up. After the check-up, I received a phone call from my doctor, asking me to come in to discuss the results of my mammogram. When I arrived at the clinic, my doctor was away on holiday, so I saw a different doctor instead.

As I sat waiting, the doctor came in and asked whether there was a history of cancer in my family. I told him that I didn't know of anyone in my family who had breast cancer. Then, he broke the news that I had breast cancer. The diagnosis devastated me—I broke down and cried. I was in complete shock and didn't know what to say. I sat in the doctor's office for a while, trying to process the news. Later, the doctor returned and informed me that he would send a referral letter to the hospital so I could begin treatment as soon as possible. He reassured me that breast cancer is not the threat it once was and that there are many survivors today because of the various treatment options available.

Despite the reassurance, I didn't go home right away. I was afraid and ashamed to tell my husband about my diagnosis. I was overwhelmed by fear and thought I was going to die, so I went to work instead of returning home for breakfast. When I finally came back that evening, my husband asked me what the doctor had said. I couldn't hold it in any longer—I burst into tears. I was hurt, ashamed, and confused. I didn't know anyone with breast cancer, and the fear of the unknown consumed me.

Two days later, I received a call from a nurse at Foothills Hospital. She gave me the name of the surgeon who would be performing my surgery and scheduled an appointment for me to meet with him. The nurse also informed me about an orientation session to help me understand the treatment process. Three weeks later, I underwent surgery, followed by 31 sessions of radiation therapy. Some friends who visited me before the surgery discouraged me, claiming that Black women don't get breast cancer and suggested I get a second opinion. But I didn't listen to them—I trusted the medical team and followed through with my treatment plan.

As of April 1, 2023, I am no longer taking any cancer medications, and I am officially in remission!

Fast Forward to.....2025
Since my diagnosis in August 2017 and completing treatment in 2018, I have been free from breast cancer. I am no longer on any cancer medication, and I feel strong and healthy. I am deeply thankful for the support I have received from the African Cancer Support Group under the Oladele Foundation. Their encouragement and community have been a vital part of my journey. Cancer is a liar, and cancer will never win.

Florence Omara





10% CHANCE
100% GOD

At 25, life was just beginning—I had a new job and big dreams. But in early 2022, everything changed. A surgery meant to remove what doctors believed was a non-cancerous tumor revealed something far worse: Stage 4 rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare and aggressive cancer.

The doctors gave me a 10% chance that treatment would work. Without it, I had a year to live. I was devastated—shocked, confused, and angry. I couldn't even book an Uber home from the hospital; I called my mom, overwhelmed.

But my parents didn't panic—they prayed. With the support of my church, RCCG Christ Love Assembly, Pastor Samuel Ilesanmi, and the Oladele Foundation, I found the strength to fight.

I endured one year and seven months of chemotherapy and radiation. It was brutal. I lost my hair, battled pain, and wrestled with my faith. But something incredible happened: my body began to respond.

Even when the cancer didn't shrink further, I held onto hope. Then, two months after finishing treatment, a scan showed what we had all prayed for:

I was cancer-free.
Today, 2.5 years later, I'm still cancer-free.
Cancer didn't win. Faith, love, and relentless hope did.
To anyone facing a diagnosis: you're not alone. Surround yourself with people who believe in you. Trust in God. Keep fighting.

You can overcome.

Marvellous Livingstone

MARVELLOUS LIVINGSTONE



HONORING 5 YEARS OF SURVIVORSHIP

On National Cancer Survivors Day

This National Cancer Survivors Day, I celebrate not just life—but the strength, scars, and story that come with surviving.

In April 2025, I reached a deeply personal milestone: five years cancer-free. It's been five years since my stem cell transplant—five years since I was given a second chance at life after battling Stage 4 Subcutaneous Panniculitis-like T-cell Lymphoma with HLH, a rare and aggressive blood cancer. At the time, my healthcare team told me, "We don't know how much time you have—this cancer is so rare, with only about 150 cases reported globally."
My brother became my stem cell donor, and I'm here today because of him.

Being a survivor is not just about overcoming cancer—it's about thriving every day.

It's about living with the memories of it—the physical pain, the mental toll, the fear of recurrence, and the unexpected grief of a life forever changed.

As an immigrant woman navigating illness in a new country, I faced unique challenges: perimenopause at 32, right eye vision loss, 30–40% hearing loss, cultural stigma, and the deep loneliness of being far from extended family.

But through this journey, I've found purpose. Today, I stand not only as a survivor, but as a patient advocate, speaker, and co-founder of Chai and Hope, a South Asian cancer support community. I use my Instagram platform (@hk_thriver) to share my story, break the silence around cancer in our community, and raise awareness about the importance of early diagnosis, mental health, and culturally sensitive care.

We are deeply underrepresented—and someone has to be the voice for those who feel isolated in this journey.

To everyone walking this path—whether you're newly diagnosed, in treatment, or in survivorship—know this: your story matters. Your voice matters.
Your strength is real. And even in the darkest times, hope can be louder than fear.

This milestone isn't mine alone. It belongs to every caregiver, doctor, fellow survivor, and supporter who stood beside me.

Together, we are redefining survivorship—not as an ending, but as a powerful new beginning.

Harjeet Kaur

Stage 4 Blood Cancer Survivor & Patient Advocate | Co-Founder, Chai and Hope - South Asian Cancer Community

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2025 Federal Election

All-Candidates Event at The Alex Community Food Centre

We co-hosted by The Alex, Bright Lights for Africa, and The Oladele Foundation, this event brought together community members and federal candidates. It gave residents, especially those in Calgary's northeast the chance to raise issues like food insecurity and better understand the importance of voting. Candidates shared their platforms and listened to community voices.



Women's Empowerment Talk at Eritrean Community Association of Calgary

We joined the Eritrean Community Association of Calgary at their Women's Empowerment Talk, an event focused on inspiring and uplifting East African women in Calgary. It was a valuable opportunity to engage with the East African community, share culturally relevant health information, and encourage early detection and support for women and families impacted by cancer.



Calgary Newcomer Centre

We engaged newcomers to Canada, introducing them to the foundation's programs and sharing important health information to increase cancer awareness and early detection in immigrant communities.



Calgary Volunteer Fair

We participated alongside other nonprofit organizations to recruit volunteers and raise awareness about cancer. It was a great opportunity to connect with Calgarians interested in giving back.









Bowling

This fun and engaging event brought together cancer survivors, caregivers, and families, for a day of bowling and bonding. It offered a relaxed space for community members to connect outside formal programs, supporting mental well-being and relationship-building within our support network.









Survivor Children Video

We produced a heartfelt video featuring children of cancer survivors, giving them space to share their personal experiences, emotions, and hopes. The goal was to highlight the often-overlooked impact of cancer on young family members and to amplify the importance of family-centered care. This video will be used to promote awareness, build empathy, and encourage greater community support for families navigating cancer.













Cooking Event –
Nourish to Flourish

This event gave participants the chance to cook, share recipes, and learn about healthy eating habits that support cancer recovery and overall wellness. It also created space for cultural exchange, and peer support through shared meals.











BONGINKOSI GWEBU (BJ) My Story



My name is BJ. I'm a proud dad of six -four boys, two girls, and even prouder to say I have a grandson who keeps me smiling even on the hardest days. Before life took a different turn, I worked with my hands as a welder. It was good, honest work. Provided for my family. Built things people needed. I miss that part of my life sometimes, but I'm learning to appreciate the journey I'm on now.

Back in 2015, everything changed. I was diagnosed with a brain Tumour I had to go to Toronto for surgery. The operation itself went well, the doctors did what they needed to do but when I woke up, my memory was completely gone. Zero. I couldn't remember a thing. Not even how to speak, read, or write. I spent a month in the hospital there before being flown back to Calgary's South Health Campus for another six weeks. Then I went home and began the real work: therapy.

I had to relearn everything, how to talk, how to read and write, even how to understand the world again. My family was by my side the whole time. I thank God every day for that. Without them, I don't know where I'd be.

After some time, I moved to Edmonton and stayed at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital. I was there for over a year. During that time, as if life hadn't tested me enough. I had an aneurysm. Back into the hospital I went. Another operation. Another reset. My memory dropped back to zero again. But through God's grace, I pulled through once more.

Then, in December of 2024, I got hit with another diagnosis: stage 4 Hodgkin's lymphoma. It felt like the wind had been knocked out of me. I started chemotherapy and radiation right away. The plan was three sessions a month. After the second session, I had a reaction in my right hand. They switched to my left, and things went smoother. Now I'm on monthly chemotherapy, taking it one day at a time.



This has been the longest, toughest road I've ever walked and I've walked a few in my day. But through all the pain, the setbacks, the fear, I've been blessed. Blessed with a family that hasn't left my side. Blessed to still be here. Blessed to have people like you to talk to people who understand what it means to struggle, to fight, and to keep going.

Meeting others who've been through their own storms has made my life feel a little lighter. Knowing I'm not alone has been one of the greatest comforts I could ask for. So, thank you. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for listening, for sharing your story too, and for reminding me that there's strength in community

Bonginkosi Gwebu

Bonginkosi Gwebu (BJ)

EMBRACING THE TRUTH OF OUR HEALING – LIVING HEALED, LIVING WHOLE



In life's journey, we encounter moments that challenge and define us. I am Pastor 'Bolanle Oladosu, a child of God, wife, mother, social worker, mental health therapist, and, by the grace of God, a two-time cancer survivor. My healing journey has been a profound testament to the unwavering truth that, in Christ, we are already healed. This healing transcends physical symptoms and is accessed through steadfast faith.

When I was first diagnosed with cancer, I was already a vessel in God's hands, praying for others, declaring healing, and witnessing His power in the lives of many. Then suddenly, I found myself in the center of the storm. The woman who once spoke faith into others now had to believe those same words for herself. What followed was not just a fight against disease, but a complete yielding to the finished work of Christ. The Lord reminded me through every tear, every moment of fear, and every medical report, that He had already made provision, not just for my healing, but for my transformation.

As a pastor, I had often proclaimed God's healing power, witnessing miracles in the lives of others. However, when I received the diagnosis, the ground beneath me seemed to crumble. The facts were evident; medical reports detailed the situation, but I was reminded that while symptoms are factual, they do not define the ultimate truth. The Scriptures affirm, "But he was wounded for our transgressions… and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). This is not a future promise but a present reality.

Understanding this required a paradigm shift. The physical manifestations of illness were undeniable, yet I chose at the time, and continue to choose, to anchor myself in the spiritual truth of divine healing. This journey was not about denying the existence of those symptoms but about affirming a higher reality, that healing is a gift already given, and through faith, we can access it. As highlighted by Kenneth Copeland Ministries, "We believe we are healed, not because we feel healed or look healed at this moment but because God said we are. By faith, we start talking like we're healed." And we heal and continue to heal.

This conviction propelled me to action. I founded AGAPE AllOurLives Ministries, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting individuals navigating faith, the complexities of life and faith, including severe illness. Our mission is to provide spiritual and emotional support, helping others recognize and access the healing already bestowed upon them through Christ before, during, and even after. To heal from the inside out. This journey taught me that healing is a posture, not just a diagnosis. Even when the system avoids words like "healed," I boldly proclaim it because of what Jesus already did. Galatians 2:20 became my daily declaration: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Since the last time I wrote for this magazine, I've continued to walk in that healing, not just for myself, but for others. I've leaned deeper into my calling, pursuing research studies with a focus on cancer survivorship, which centers on advocacy, faith, and complementary cancer care, while upholding the voices of people like me—believers, Black, faith-filled individuals navigating healing while holding space for wholeness. Not as a victim, but as a visionary survivor. Also, in my ongoing research, I explore the intersection of faith and healing, particularly within the African diaspora. This work delves into how cultural perceptions and spiritual beliefs influence health outcomes, aiming to bridge the gap between medical approaches and faith-based healing practices.

I speak not only of trauma, but of purpose. Not only of struggle, but of song. Not only of physical healing, but also spiritual and emotional healing. Not just about clear scans, but a clear mind. Not just allopathic medicine, but everything that can help, whether it is naturopathic or dietary . Not silencing possibilities, but exploring them safely. Every life is worth it, and everyone deserves to live. The system should support everyone with all that is beneficial, and no one should survive and be in debt. I live and pray for the day when cancer will be reduced to nothing and people will thrive.

To all survivors, thrivers, caregivers, the bereaved, and all those navigating the healing journey: The truth is that in your spirit, you are already healed. Embrace this reality, speak it over your life, and walk in the fullness of health that has been graciously provided. As we align our faith with this truth, the evidence of healing will manifest, transcending the facts presented by the physical circumstances. You are not alone. This journey is not just medical; it's mental, emotional, spiritual, and communal. Let us never underestimate the power of faith to carry us, not around the fire, but through it. Whether your physical healing is in progress or complete, know this: God is faithful.

I thank God for my healing, I live because Jesus thought I am worth dying and rising for. I'm here because His grace says I still have work to do, songs to sing, and people to love. My healing is not just mine; it is a testimony that continues to multiply.

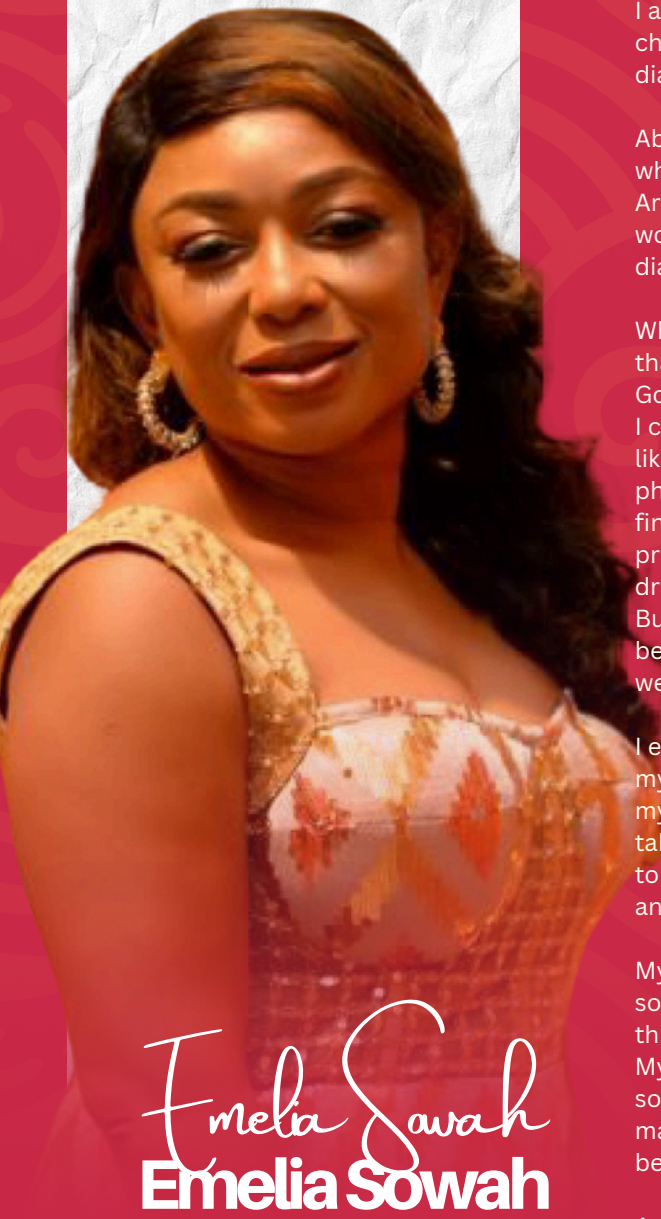
This is my story. This is my song, still enjoying healing, still here by faith and by grace.



'Bola Oladosue

PASTOR BOLA OLADOSU

THE CRY OF A CAREGIVER



Emelia Sowah

I am a mom of 3 beautiful daughters and I went through the challenges of having to be a caregiver to my husband who was diagnosed with multiple myeloma/amyloidosis.

About 6 months into buying our new house, the disease was found when he had made his travel to Ghana and found himself sick. Arrived in YYC he then got rushed to the hospital. I was deeply worried at that time. It was a very big deal for me when the physician diagnosed him with cancer.

When I heard about his sickness I asked myself why me. But from that moment I knew I had the strength to overcome anything with God by my side. The journey through this experience was very tough. I cannot lie. At times I felt depressed, stressed, weak, and I even felt like I wanted to give up. I felt like I was getting sick mentally and physically too. I was also working that time to meet I and my family's financial needs. At times it felt draining because through the process, the patient we care for through the sickness could mentally drain you and make you feel like you are the case of their sickness. But through it all, I know that I had to be patient with my husband because the kind of disease, treatment, and medicine he was given were affecting his way of thinking.

I eventually overcame this all by believing in my God and also myself. I know it was my cross and I'm the only one who can handle my cross that's why it was given to me. But the only person who can take care of my cross is my God. No amount of love people will show to me can take my cross down but the man up there did it all for me and that's why I thank him everyday. He was my only hope.

My community was also a big help in my situation too. Knowing that someone was on my side gave me stability. They helped me a lot but this fight was for me and my family. We fought the battle.
My family stood by my side through all. Of course we are still facing some challenges today because the sickness is not cured but manageable with the right procedure but we know how to handle it because we have been there before.

An advice I would give someone who is going through a similar situation is that it is not easy. You will just have to put yourself first as a caregiver before the patient. It is a challenging process. There is no lie in that but trusting God is the best decision you can make. And only He can help you fight your battles.



Oroma Okatahi

LIFE BEFORE CANCER: A child of God, career wife, mum of two with a busy 30's lifestyle.

DIAGNOSIS: Spotted a lump in right my armpit in spring of 2020, didn't pay too much attention as there is no history of cancer in my family. Instead I blamed it on shaving sticks, switched my method and added the use of fresh aloe vera to my routine. Fast forward to December 2020, as the season changed to Winter so did my armpit. I went for my annual check and that led to a series of investigations—within a few classes, three biopsy waves and scans, it was discovered there were active cancer cells in my body but my weekly blood work was always "clean" as tests never negatively signaled me closer to death. After two months of delay (appointment was delayed because I got COVID), I got a diagnosis of a rare form of Lymphoma known as Nodular Lymphocyte Predominant Hodgkin's Lymphoma on March 5th 2021 and was advised to begin treatment immediately on March 9th 2021.

TREATMENT AND OUTCOME: Treatment option included three drugs, six rounds of chemotherapy, radiation and a bone marrow transplant. My treatment started with prayers, I was too weak and broken to pray initially. Everyone who knew me was praying and fasting. After four rounds of Chemo I went in for a massage and the cancer was no where to be found. I stopped treatment after six rounds of chemotherapy. Additional treatments were not completed. In medical terms, my body showed a complete response in the first stage of treatment and addition treatment wasn't needed.

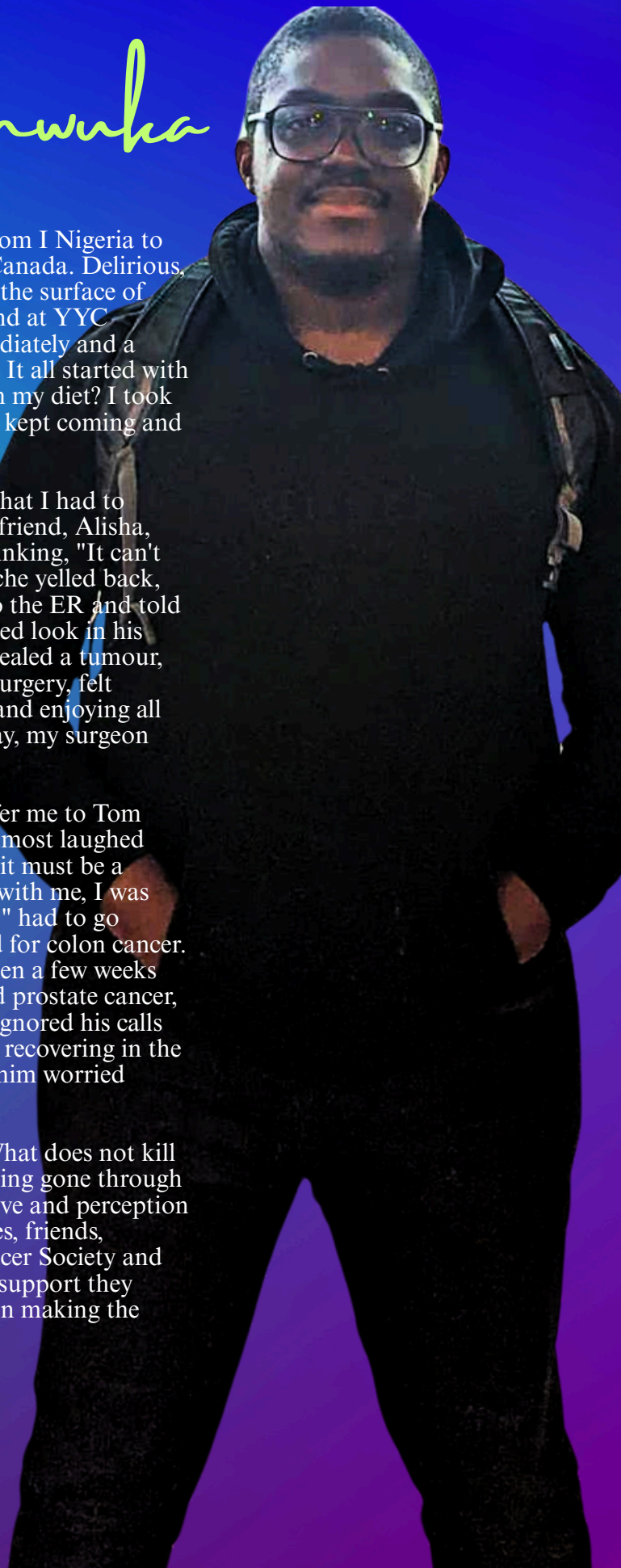
LIFE AFTER TREATMENT: Follow up checks once every three months. I'm thriving and living life from a different perspective.

Oroma Okatahi

Oroma Okatahi

MY CANCER JOURNEY

Francis Sy-Onwuka



It has been a long road since I decided to relocate from I Nigeria to Canada, but here I was finally in Calgary, Alberta Canada. Delirious, excited and over the moon would just be scratching the surface of how I felt at that moment my feet touched the ground at YYC International airport I got my first job almost immediately and a second one soon after, I was on a roll. Shit happens. It all started with a stomach ache. Was it something I ate? A change in my diet? I took some Pantoprazole to treat acid reflux, but the pain kept coming and going.

One day while at work, the pain became so intense that I had to double over at my desk in agony. My colleague and friend, Alisha, advised me to go to the ER. I took myself home, thinking, "It can't be that bad. I will sleep this off." But my stomach ache yelled back, "Not today." Reluctantly, I took my stubborn self to the ER and told the doctor what was happening. I noticed a concerned look in his eyes as he said he wanted to do a scan. The scan revealed a tumour, and I was told I would need surgery. I got through surgery, felt relieved, and was ready to go back to living my life and enjoying all that my new environment had to offer. Then, one day, my surgeon called.

The tumour was cancerous, and he would like to refer me to Tom Baker Cancer Centre immediately. I chuckled and almost laughed "Cancer? Me? How? That's not possible." I thought it must be a prank. But when the doctor was not laughing back with me, I was like, "Okay, this is real; this is real life; this is my life." had to go through 12 cycles of chemo over a six-month period for colon cancer. Those were not fun times, and it got even darker when a few weeks after my last cycle of chemo, my father died. He had prostate cancer, but I never told him what I was going through and ignored his calls whenever he called me while I was in the hospital or recovering in the off-cycle period. I felt there was no point in getting him worried about me.

Hindsight is 20/20, and looking back, I regret it. “What does not kill you… I am lucky and grateful. I am grateful for having gone through this experience., it profoundly changed my perspective and perception of life. I am grateful to my family, my doctors, nurses, friends, colleagues and organizations like the Canadian Cancer Society and African Cancer Support Group for all the help and support they provided me. I got another lease on life and I plan on making the most out of it.

Francis Sy-Onwuka

MOTUNRAYO AGBOOLA



I am super grateful to God for the journey I have been through, and the opportunity to write this story. I do so with the assurance that it will encourage at least one person.

When it began in July of 2019, it seemed like I would never return, but I'm grateful. I came back and began the relocation to Canada, living with young children, career-wise hit hard and going through cancer at the same time.

Following the diagnosis of Stage III B breast cancer, I had to first fight the battle of the mind. So many questions, such as why did God wrong time like this. So many negative thoughts, thinking only of people who die but not survive cancer.

But here I am to praise my God, my maker for seeing me through six months of chemo and radiotherapy and the side effects that came with them. There were so many days that seemed like the end, days of fatigue, skin discolour, hair loss, nausea, fatigue, mood changes, some days were extra depressing.

The experience is one I can not completely write here but overall I give thanks to my God for encouraging me. I am super grateful!

The support was huge. The word of God spoken into my life and body did wonders!

My little advice for anyone who has recovered or will ever receive the kind of news/diagnosis like it or similar: please note that you have not offended anyone. You have not done anything wrong. It happens, please do live and enjoy life. Allow others to celebrate it. And if I am allowed again…

You're going through this. Please do not do it alone: seek for help and be determined to live.

Thank you for reading and God bless.

Motunrayo Agboola



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THE IMPACT OF A MOTHER'S ILLNESS ON A CHILD'S LIFE AND EMOTIONS.



One day my parents called me to their room and told me that mom had breast cancer. When I heard my mom had cancer at first I did not understand what it meant but when I did I was very scared and sad. She had to have chemotherapy, I hated chemo because mommy was so sick and lay in bed a lot and couldn't do homeschool lessons with my brother and I. Also I had to stop piano lessons because mommy couldn't practice with me. She lost her hair that was the worst part for me, her hair was so pretty. My parents always told me that chemo was bad but it was to help mom feel better later. She also had radiation which burnt her skin, I helped to put medicine on her burnt skin. She thought I was very brave by doing that. I knew she would be ok and a few months later she was fine. Our home was not the same when mommy was sick but she danced with me on days she was better. Our favorite song was, she is a warrior by Alita. During treatment I helped with things like massaging her feet, giving her a spa in bed, taking care of my baby brother and preparing breakfast for her.

I was more scared when I heard that I had the risk of cancer on myself so I pray everyday that I don't. I am so thankful that mommy is fine now and we get to do so many things together. I know God answered my prayer by saving my mom from cancer. I am so proud of her and I love her ❤️

Londiwe Ndlovu

10 years old) daughter of Bee Ndlovu



TENDAI TORIRO

CHOOSING PEACE IN THE MIDST OF CANCER

My name is Tendai Toriro and I am a breast cancer survivor. I share my story as a testimony of what Jesus did in my life. Hope it encourages and gives peace to anyone who finds themselves receiving any devastating diagnosis.

I was diagnosed in 2022 . I had surgery by October. I remember it was a lot of overwhelming information. I did a lot of research too. The best part is when you have lots of resources around you and you have to choose the one to go with.

I'm really grateful the doctors were quick to act on it and we made our decisions and agreed to start a treatment plan and everything went smoothly by January 2023 I had started chemotherapy and the 12 rounds of treatment left my body, beaten, tired , aching, changed, and I had to adjust to the new me. I remember how everyone around me was so positive and the positivity just flooded me, making it a lot bearable . By May I had finished the 17 rounds of radiation and still had to finish the 15 Herceptin till December 2023 what a long haul. Having another surgery on my arm, didn't make it better , but I'm glad it was done. All the additional appointments were a plus to the proliferating appointments I had.

I am thankful for my husband and my children, the care, the love, the patience that they have changed the trajectory. They couldn't do this alone, without a community of friends and family far and near, loved ones, church members and neighbours. I was reading many stories going over the browser and I stumbled across Oladele story. In searching for connections i googled and found ACSG and connected right away. I didn't go through this journey alone.

So are you done with treatment? This is the question now and I say yes because active treatment is done but every day I'm being intentional about living, let alone the 5 year hormonal plan still active. Everything feels like back to normal but what I have been through gave me a new perspective to life, I thank God.

Tendai Toriro

Tendai Toriro

LIFE AFTER CANCER, THE NEW NORMAL



I was talking to an aunt of mine recently and she said, 'Life itself is a terminal disease, from the day we take our first breath, we are one day closer to the moment we breathe our last." Just like everyone else, some days I feel euphoric, thankful that I get to see the day, and some days when life decides to spring its troubles on me, I feel exhausted and overwhelmed! I understand that some struggles are challenges to conquer, others are heavy weights to carry through life.

Unlike those who have never experienced cancer, many days, I experience one or more physical and psychological symptoms of my cancer treatment or have a particularly triggering event that makes me wonder why I am still here, why I will never be the same again, why I am a burden to my family. Many days, I want to quit and walk out on myself, but then I think of how far I have come to leave myself behind at this point. I carry with me every day a backpack full of grief! The toll cancer diagnosis, treatment, and life after takes on both our physical and mental health is incomprehensible! You may be trying to commend me for handling a challenge that you can barely even imagine, but so many moments, I have felt that the cancer battle isn't just unfair, but it also feels impossible to bear. I have drenched my pillows in tears many nights while I wonder and ponder on how I will handle this new life after cancer.

I am grateful to be alive, but while everyone treats my survivorship like a very happy occasion, honestly, I do not know for certain how I feel about it. I feel grief. Grief over the life I will never get to live, grief over the choices I don't get to make anymore, grief over the opportunities I don't get to take anymore, grief over things I don't get to experience anymore because cancer has wrecked my body and mind. Grief over some joys I will never feel. Grief over not being able to live one day pain-free, grief over not being able to think a simple headache is just a headache and not cancer. Grief over not being able to treat and indulge myself because of the fear of cancer. Grief over not being able to think I will live to see my 80th birthday just like everyone does. People are truly oblivious to the upheavals that cancer survivors go through and the emotions that abound.

I am thankful that I am a survivor, and I am happy to celebrate that, but it is important to acknowledge that there are so many hidden intricacies to life after Cancer. It is not just a celebration; it is ok to grieve too. I have many scars, both physically and emotionally. I have PTSD from the trauma. Llife has been hard, pain-full, harsh, unfair. I am learning and growing, but I still struggle tremendously each day. I have lost some valuable years to cancer, but I have found a community that has given me strength, support, and liberation through shared experiences and shared strength. For that, I am truly grateful.

Adeola Adesemowo

Adeola Adesemowo

OMOLOLA ADELEYE

My story



My name is Omolola Adeleye, in 2021, during my routine physical examination, I was diagnosed with numerous fibroids, which were found to be cancerous following surgery.

Receiving that news was undoubtedly devastating, but as a believer with implicit faith and a mentality of zero tolerance for sickness, I immediately began utilizing some of the spiritual mysteries I had been taught which includes fasting, chanting healing scriptures, daily use of anointing oil and communion, seed sowing, and reading books, testimonials of survivors and more.

When the cancer clinic informed me that I would need chemotherapy, fear momentarily overtook my faith, and my thoughts began to race. I then turned to God, seeking guidance and a way out.

Instructions soon followed, including a radical dietary change, regular exercise, intermittent fasting, and other protocols.

Although I experienced some difficulty after the first chemotherapy treatment, which required a visit to the emergency room, I am grateful for the insight that fasting for at least 24 hours before the infusion proved helpful. I continued to adhere strictly to my dietary and exercise regimens and fared better during the remaining treatments.

To the Glory of God, subsequent scans showed no indication of cancer in my body. Glory hallelujah to God for showing me mercy.

Thanks to the Oladele Foundation for all the support to cancer survivors and patients.

My vow to God is to give back as much as I can by His grace so help me God.

Omolola Adeleye

Omolola Adeleye



I WAS DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST CANCER

In February of 2015, it was deemed at least a stage 2 at the time. I began chemo right away and later had a bilateral mastectomy with reconstruction in July of the same year. I have been doing well since then, to the glory of God.

Yetunde Eniola

YETUNDE ENIOLA

ROSEMARY BOSCO

It has been three years since I was diagnosed with breast cancer, and sincerely, I am truly grateful for the gift of life. There is always hope beyond what you see. It is possible not just to survive, but to thrive and live a healthy, wonderful life again. Life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we react to it. Cancer is like a seesaw—on the bad days, be the warrior. Every warrior has a scar to show they fought a good fight, and to me, my cancer scars define a true warrior. Thank you to my family and friends for holding my hand through it all, and above all, thank you, God, for giving me another chance at life.

Rosemary Bosco



EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK:

The Caregiver: A Shelter in the Storm

By Yinka Oladele

I never imagined I would become a caregiver. Not in the way it happened. Not with the suddenness, the silence, or the sacred weight of it all.

When cancer entered my family, it did not knock politely—it stormed in, upending everything. It took my mother's voice before we even knew what was wrong. It left my husband hollow-eyed and fighting for his life. It tested my faith when my sister's diagnosis came like a thief in the night. In all of this, I became what no one trains you to be: the strong one, the steady one, the one who holds everyone else together while quietly falling apart.

Caregiving is not just about medications, appointments, and meals. It's about absorbing someone else's pain and still finding a way to smile through your own tears. It's about holding a hand during chemotherapy, advocating for care in unfamiliar systems, and learning how to comfort when words fail. It's about being present—in the mess, in the fear, and in the fragile moments of hope.

There were days I felt invisible. People would ask, "How is your husband doing? But rarely, "And how are you?" We are often seen as helpers, never as those in need of help. But caregiving is a storm that can wear down even the strongest shelter.

That's why I wrote this book. To give voice to those who carry the weight of others. To honour the silent strength of caregivers—especially those of us in African and immigrant communities, where stigma, culture, and silence can make the journey even more isolating.

In these pages, I share our story—not just of suffering, but of resilience. Not just of grief, but of grace. I speak to every woman, every man, every child who has sat at a bedside and prayed for healing. I speak to every soul who has said, "I don't know how much longer I can do this," and then woke up the next day and did it anyway.

To be a caregiver is to walk through the storm with your arms wide open. It is to love fiercely, serve quietly, and endure faithfully. You are not alone. This book is for you - the book is for everyone.

Order a copy today.

Yinka Oladele

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SELF-CARE FOR CANCER CAREGIVERS

Being a caregiver for a loved one battling cancer can be one of the most challenging and emotionally draining experiences a person can face. Watching someone you care about struggle with the physical, emotional, and mental toll of cancer is heartbreaking. The constant worry, stress, and physical demands can begin to wear you down, often leading to what is known as caregiver burnout. Caregiver burnout is a real and valid phenomenon. It's a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by the prolonged stress of caring for someone with a serious illness. You may find yourself feeling detached, irritable, overwhelmed, or unable to concentrate. Sometimes it feels like you're running on empty, with no energy left for yourself or anyone else.

It's important to understand that you are not alone in this struggle. Many caregivers experience the same emotional strain, and there are effective coping techniques that can help you manage during this difficult time. One of the most vital things to remember is to take care of yourself first. Though it may seem counterintuitive, prioritizing your own well-being enables you to be a better caregiver for your loved one. This includes getting enough rest, eating nutritious meals, and engaging in activities that bring you joy and peace. Communication is also key. Sharing your feelings with someone you trust—whether it's a friend, a support group, or a mental health professional—can provide much-needed relief and guidance. You don't have to carry the emotional weight alone. Set boundaries and ask for help. It's perfectly okay to say no to extra responsibilities or to lean on family, friends, or community resources. You don't have to do everything by yourself, and asking for support is a sign of strength, not weakness. Try to find small moments of joy and rest in your day. Whether it's taking a walk in nature, listening to music, meditating, or simply breathing deeply for a few minutes—these simple actions can do wonders to rejuvenate your spirit.

Lastly, celebrate the small victories and milestones along the way. Acknowledge your strength, resilience, and everything you do—no matter how big or small. Caregiving is a profound act of love, and recognizing your efforts can help sustain you. Caring for a loved one with cancer is a deeply emotional and demanding journey. But by practicing self-care, seeking support, and allowing yourself moments of peace, you can navigate through caregiver fatigue and come out stronger and more compassionate on the other side. Remember, you are not alone—and there are resources, communities, and coping strategies to help you thrive, even in the most difficult times.

Tise Owolabi

Tise Owolabi



IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY MY HEALTH JOURNEY.

In December 2007, I noticed a painful swelling in my right breast. I spoke to my brother-in-law, who is a medical doctor, and he examined it. He was concerned about the "orange skin" appearance and prescribed some pain medication, which provided temporary relief. The swelling subsided, and I didn't think much of it. However, in February 2008, the swelling returned—this time with unbearable pain that no medication could ease. I went to our local hospital in Buea, Cameroon, and was referred to a specialist in women's health in Yaoundé. At this point, the doctors began suggesting breast cancer, but I was in denial and hoped the specialist would give a different diagnosis.

During this difficult period, my children were just 8, 5, and 2 years old, and my husband had recently received a visa to travel to Canada, which added more stress to an already overwhelming time for our family. When I saw the specialist, he decided to perform a biopsy to determine whether the growth was malignant or benign. It's worth noting that a year earlier, I had been diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, so I was already managing a chronic condition. After the biopsy, the doctor delivered the unexpected and devastating news: I had breast cancer. He scheduled me for radiology and chemotherapy, but said surgery would have to be done first.

Despite my best friend's father discouraging me from undergoing surgery—advising instead a five-day water fast—I went ahead with the operation out of desperation and hope for recovery.

My husband was so devastated by the diagnosis that he couldn't even sit in the same room with me. He considered forfeiting his Canadian visa, but I encouraged him to travel, telling him that if the worst were to happen, at least the children would have a future.

My brother Gilbert, a nurse at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, sent me an invitation letter to travel to the U.S. for treatment. Through it all, I held onto my faith. I prayed earnestly every day, lifting my parents, young children, and husband before the throne of God. Once I overcame the fear through faith, I found true peace. I told everyone I was healed—not because I was in denial, but because I was standing in faith.

I vividly remember my visit to the American Embassy in Yaoundé. The interviewer asked me why I believed America was the best place to treat my cancer. When I mentioned that I was also diabetic, he granted me a visa, held my hands, and prayed for me. That was when I decided not to pursue treatment in Cameroon.

I traveled to America on July 4, 2008, leaving my three young children with my sister. I had told my brother that I didn't have cancer and that my trip was part of a divine plan to visit America. When I arrived amid fireworks, I jokingly told him it was my grand welcome to the U.S. A few days later, I went to my appointment at MD Anderson. Without insurance, the consultation and preliminary tests were estimated at $8,000. My brother, sisters, and husband began figuring out how to pay. I asked my brother if there were other hospitals that could conduct the same tests at a lower cost. He found a nearby clinic online. I went there with my sister-in-law, and they quoted $500 for the same tests. I was amazed by the vast price difference. The clinic staff reviewed my paperwork and informed me of a program for women under 35 diagnosed with breast cancer, which offered free treatment. To my shock, I qualified. They scheduled the necessary tests, and after they were completed, the results came back negative for breast cancer. My faith had set me free —and I was free indeed.

I stayed in the U.S. for six months, visiting my sisters in Maryland and having a wonderful time. Unfortunately, my husband was denied a U.S. visa from Canada and couldn't visit me. Before returning to Cameroon, I underwent another round of tests, which again confirmed that I was cancer-free.

In 2014, I came to Canada for a mammogram, which was clear. I've just turned 46 and am due for another one, but I have full confidence that there is nothing to worry about.

There are a few takeaways from my experience. I was under significant stress when I had my last child, and I believe that contributed to my Type 2 diabetes diagnosis. Stress weakens the immune system and keeps the body in fight, flight, or freeze mode, making it more vulnerable to illness. It didn't surprise me that I was diagnosed with breast cancer soon after.

I found strength in my faith. When I faced cancer, my faith weakened its grip on me. I shifted from fear to a place of stability and control. In that parasympathetic state, I was able to activate healing. Today, I am an avid advocate for fasting and have learned much about its healing power. Back then, a friend's father gave me a book on fasting and encouraged me to try a five-day water fast. I trusted him and followed through. I believe that helped, too.

Positive relationships are powerful. My friends stood by me, prayed novenas with me, and visited often—especially when my husband had traveled. My siblings in the U.S. rallied together to provide everything I needed to travel and seek care. When you are surrounded by that much love, how could you not survive?

I want to take this opportunity to thank my husband, parents, siblings, friends, and everyone who stood by me during those challenging times. God gave me a second chance. Today, I work in the health and wellness space because I want to serve. I want to be a shoulder for anyone facing difficult health challenges to lean on.



ZITA TANGWA EPSE NDIESHE

Health and Wellness Coach

THIS IS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER.



> anger—just for the moment. That's it. Don't try to talk them out of how they are feeling. That doesn't help. It will only make them feel like what they are going through is being minimized. Don't remind them of all the good things they still have in their life. They know. They are grateful. But some days they are more aware of that gun pressing into the back of their head, and they need to talk about it. Offer them an ear."
> —Sherry McAllister

Bee: When I came across this, I felt understood and it has helped those close to me also understand what it's like to be a cancer survivor. This is basically how the past 2 years have been for me. The "scanciety", yup that's real, the days leading to the scan and hours or days after as one waits for the results can be a challenge and you can never get used to it. One day at a time we make it through with so much gratitude for each day, we power through the fatigue and scared bodies. I am determined to THRIVE amid what feels like chaos at times when my health challenges me, the deep sadness I feel when I learn of someone who has died due to cancer. I am determined to be present in the lives of my loved ones and do my best as much as I can, for tomorrow is not promised.

"Imagine you're going about your day, minding your own business, when someone sneaks up behind you. You feel something press up against the back of your head, as someone whispers in your ear…

"Sssshhhhh—don't turn around. Just listen. I am holding a gun against the back of your head. I'm going to keep it there. I'm going to follow you around like this every day, for the rest of your life. "I'm going to press a bit harder, every so often, just to remind you I'm here, but you need to try your best to ignore me, to move on with your life. Act like I'm not here, but don't you ever forget—one day I may just pull the trigger—or maybe I won't. Isn't this going to be a fun game?"

THIS is what it is like to be diagnosed with cancer. Any STAGE of cancer. Any KIND of cancer. Remission does not change the constant fear. It never truly goes away. It's always in the back of your mind.

Please, if you have a loved one who has ever been diagnosed with cancer, remember this. They may.

Bee Ndlovu

Buhlebenkosi (Bee) Ndlovu

WALKING WITH Bee

A SISTER'S JOURNEY THROUGH BREAST CANCER

In 2021, my world paused when my sister Buhle—affectionately known as Bee—was diagnosed with breast cancer. I was in my final year of university in Lacombe, Alberta, juggling coursework, assignments, and part-time work. Life was already intense, and her diagnosis added a weight I could have never anticipated. Yet, in an unexpected way, COVID-19 became a silent blessing. The shift to online learning allowed me the flexibility to be physically present for Bee, and for that, I remain immensely grateful. My professors showed grace and understanding, giving me the space to prioritize my family while continuing my studies.

Each week became a ritual. On Mondays, I would make the drive to Edmonton to be with Bee. On Thursdays, I returned to Lacombe to work over the weekend. The road between those two cities became a symbol of the emotional and physical journey we were on—a path of resilience, prayer, and unwavering love.

Someone once told me that the best thing I could do was to be there for Bee first and process my own emotions later. So, that's exactly what I did. I stepped into the role of caregiver with fierce dedication. The cancer center had given her a list of essentials—items that would bring comfort or help her manage side effects—and I made sure she had every one of them. From warm socks to soothing teas, I wanted her to feel cared for in every possible way.

I also tried to relieve her of everyday worries, especially when it came to the children. "Auntie Mommy" was on duty. I cooked meals between university assignments, kept her space clean and calm, and made sure she had plenty of time to rest. Rest was her weapon. Her body needed strength for the battle, and I wanted to make sure she had all she needed to fight it.

The day she rang the bell after her final radiation treatment, my heart swelled with pride and gratitude. That sound—clear and triumphant—marked the end of a harrowing chapter. Every time I see the scars on her chest, I am reminded of the warrior she is. Bee is, without question, a superhero. A real one. Not because she never felt fear or pain, but because she faced both and kept going.The Edmonton Cancer Society has banners around the city that say, "No one fights cancer alone. We fight together." That message resonates deeply. Bee never fought alone. She was surrounded by love, faith, and relentless support. We prayed, we cried, we laughed, and we stood firm together.

Through it all, we leaned on God's mercy and strength. It was His grace that carried us through the darkest days and gave us moments of joy in the midst of pain. I am beyond thankful that we came through together.

Being a caregiver was one of the hardest things I've ever done—but also the most beautiful. It taught me about sacrifice, unconditional love, and the quiet power of just being there. Bee fought breast cancer with everything she had—and I'm honored to have fought beside her.

Today, Bee continues to show what true strength looks like, and I continue to walk beside her, proud to be her sister. Her journey reminded me that love shows up, even when life gets messy, and that sometimes, blessings hide in the most unexpected places—even a global pandemic.

And for that, I am eternally thankful.

Written By Busi Phuthi (Bee's Sister)



Busi Phuthi

Busi Phuthi

Bee's Sister



DEBBIE ENIOLA'S STORY

"I was ten years old when I started witnessing my mom's health declining. To avoid alarming my brother and me, my parents waited to tell us about her diagnosis. However, in the meantime, it was evident that something was very wrong. I watched her hair fall out, found pamphlets and books about cancer around the house, and saw her energy wane. I feared the worst, and eventually, those fears were confirmed when my mother revealed to us that she had breast cancer.

At that moment, I felt confused, uncertain, and terrified. Saying that it was difficult to watch her go through everything is an understatement, but I tried to keep all those thoughts of anxiety to myself because I did not want to burden her with those feelings when she was already battling so much at once. Thankfully, my mom has been cancer-free for almost nine years now, and I look forward to many more years with her by my side. While that was an overwhelming period for my family, I look back at that time with gratitude to God for healing and the community that rallied to support us. I also admire the strength and resilience my mom continues to demonstrate each day."

- Debbie Eniola

-Debbie Eniola

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MILTON ANTHONY BROWN

"My name is Milton Anthony Brown, and I was born in Montego Bay, Jamaica. I didn't grow up with my mother, only my father, so I had to learn everything at an early age.

At 20, I moved to Ocho Rios, then to Kingston, Harbour View in 1980. In 1980, I was invited to a church by a lady to attend a watch night service on the 31st of December. After the preaching, the pastor asked if anyone in the service who didn't know or receive Jesus Christ as their savior should come to the front. I walked right up. There were two of us young men at the front. After the prayer, the youth pastor took both of us and sat us down. He asked if we knew what we had just done, and we said yes. Then he asked if we could pray. I didn't know how to pray, but he said I should say anything that came to my mind. I remember saying, 'Lord, I don't want to talk about anyone else's experience. I would like to have my own.' I was 27 years old, and I can say that from that night, my life totally changed.

Three months after my experience with Jesus Christ, I was given a job with one of the biggest companies in Jamaica, Grace Kennedy. After working there for a while, I became friends with a customer who mentioned that he had a sister in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, who was unmarried and looking for a husband. I told him that if it was God's will for us to meet, it would happen. After that conversation, I didn't think about it again until his wife approached me and said that her sister was coming down for a vacation.

Eventually, she came to Jamaica in 1988, and we met in 1989. On the 20th of April, 1990, we got married. I migrated to Calgary, Alberta, Canada, on the 20th of May, 1992. When I arrived, I worked at George Barack Nursing Home in Bridge Land and then at Walmart on McCloud Trail.

On the 20th of April 1995, I took my wife at the time to a restaurant downtown to celebrate. It was our anniversary. However, I couldn't eat because nothing could pass through my throat. Neither of us knew why, so she took me to Rocky View Hospital to see what was going on. The doctors ran some tests but couldn't find the problem and wanted to send me home. I refused to leave until they found out what was wrong. Eventually, they called in a specialist in throat conditions. I don't remember his name now, but when he checked, he found that my throat was infected. If I had followed the initial plan to go home, "So, after that incident, I got a call from a doctor at Rocky View Hospital who wanted to see me. I went to see him, and he mentioned that he had been running some tests on my blood work and realized that I was a bit of an enigma. He said he needed to conduct more tests to figure out what was causing the problem. A couple of months later, I received another call from him. His name was Dr. Singh, and he was from India. When I met with him, he mentioned that he saw something concerning and suggested that I undergo a bone marrow test. They used a long needle to extract some of my bone marrow for testing. That's when they discovered I had Multiple Myeloma. It was the 20th of July, 1995, and I was 41 years old. From that day on, my life has never been the same.

I was always active before, playing soccer, cricket, volleyball, table tennis, tennis, and even boxing as an amateur. Realizing I wouldn't be able to do these things anymore, I immediately asked the doctor to start treatment. He mentioned he wasn't the oncologist but would refer me to one. The oncologist at the time at the

Tom Baker Cancer Centre was Dr. Allan Jones, the top oncologist then. He said he would start with a small amount of treatment, and I could stay at home until the heavier doses, at which point I would need to be in the hospital at Tom Baker, unit 57. I remember I weighed 170lb before, but I lost 70lb, leaving me at just 100lb. I couldn't eat anything because nothing stayed in my stomach. They had to insert a tube through my nostril into my stomach to feed me liquids. It was fortunate that when I migrated to Calgary, Alberta, Canada, my wife took me to see her family doctor. He advised us that if we were planning to have children, we should do it quickly.

My first daughter, Kahaliah, was born in 1994 on the 6th of February, and my second daughter, Shantel, was born on the 3rd of March 1995. I was diagnosed in 1995 on the 20th of July, so I strongly believe that this was God's plan from the beginning. About three years ago, the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart and told me that He sent my wife to help save my life because He knew I was going to be sick. This is why I still love my ex-wife because, with all the things I have been through, I wouldn't have made it if I were still living in Jamaica.

In 1998, we planned to go to Jamaica as a family. Before I left, I was feeling pain in my left side. When the test results came back, it was a blood clot in my lung. They had to put me on blood thinners before I could travel. While in Jamaica, I had to see a doctor there to monitor my blood work because it couldn't be too thin or thick. He told me that if I were in Jamaica, I wouldn't have made it because those types of treatments weren't available there.

Even when I did the bone marrow transplant in 1996, I didn't receive anyone else's bone marrow. The doctors took out my bone marrow, treated it, and put it back into me. Getting someone else's bone marrow could have led to complications and rejection. With my own bone marrow, I have a 95% survival rate because it's already mine; it just takes a while to fit back into my system.

Today, I can shout from the hilltops and all around the world that God is good and amazing. He is the only true and living God of the universe. It's been over 26 years since I was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma, and I've been through many ups and downs, betrayed by my best friend. But God has been with me in good times and bad. He knows where I failed Him and where I have pleased Him.

God is good all the time. If I didn't have problems, I wouldn't know that God could solve them. I am 69 years old, and if the good Lord permits, I will be 70 years old this October. But this is up to Him and no one else. He has the final say in everything in my life.

Thanks to the African Foundation and the Support Group for this opportunity to be a part of this non-profit organization so I can share my testimony with others. I pray continual blessings, success, and prosperity, that the good Lord will continue to open up the windows of heaven and pour down showers of blessings on your families, your businesses, and this organization. Amen.



Milton Anthony Brown

MILTON ANTHONY BROWN



THE STORY OF MY LIFE AS A CANCER SURVIVOR (2015–2021)

Modupe Obilana

MODUPE ADERINOLA OBILANA

MODUPE ADERINOLA OBILANA

The story of my life as a cancer survivor and my journey from 2015 to 2021. Thank God for Canada.

Many of you gathered here today may have heard my story—how I escaped death not once, but twice due to cancer. I will continue to share it, especially for the benefit of new members in our amazing family at the African Cancer Support Group (ACSG).

In December 2015, I was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML). I underwent intense treatment for over seven to eight months, which included multiple rounds of chemotherapy. I was admitted to the ICU twice during this time, but by God's grace, I achieved remission and remained cancer-free for almost five years. I truly believed the worst was behind me.

However, in July 2020, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the cancer relapsed. Following a routine six-month checkup, I was asked to return to the hospital the next day. Thus, my second journey with AML began. In December 2020, I received a bone marrow transplant, and I was incredibly blessed to have my son as my donor. The treatment journey was difficult and tested every part of me.

In February 2021, I developed three different infections, including pneumonia, which led to another ICU admission. I was placed in an induced coma that was supposed to last only a few days, but I remained unconscious for about 14 days. All hope seemed lost. My family and friends were devastated and worried, though I was unaware of the gravity of my condition at the time—I only learned about it later from them.

To God be the glory for all the great things He has done.
If there is anyone here today facing challenges—whether health-related or otherwise—please don't give up. Stay prayerful and positive. What God cannot do does not exist. I am a living testimony to that truth.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the amazing founders of the African Cancer Support Group, Mr. and Mrs. Oladele, as well as the organizers, volunteers, sponsors, and every member of ACSG. You are all truly wonderful people. May the Almighty God meet each of you at the point of your needs. And by His grace, we shall all be cancer-free, in Jesus' name. Amen.

MAUREEN INEGBENIJIE

MY BREAST CANCER JOURNEY

July 11, 2020, was a beautiful, sunny Saturday afternoon when I received a call from my doctor. My test results were back, and the biopsy showed malignant cells. I couldn't believe what he was telling me. A thousand thoughts raced through my mind. How could I have breast cancer in my 30s? I was in good health, active, and didn't eat junk food. What had I done wrong?

I broke down in tears. I hadn't realized how serious things were until that moment. The truth hit me hard: I had cancer. I had actually visited other doctors three times the previous year, complaining about a swollen lymph node that wouldn't go away. I underwent several tests, and each time, I was told there was nothing to worry about. So I didn't worry—until I discovered another lump in March 2020. This time, the doctor added a biopsy to the set of tests, and that's when the cancer was found.

He gave me a lot of information about my options and the prognosis. He told me I was lucky—it was caught early. Based on the tumor size, it was classified as stage 1, grade 1. He assured me that with surgery, radiation, and hormone therapy, I would be okay. I was in shock and denial. Nine days later, I met with the surgical oncologist. More information was thrown at me, and I had to shut most of it out to avoid feeling overwhelmed. He outlined the same treatment options I had been given earlier and was surprised when I chose to proceed with surgery just a few days later. I just wanted the nightmare to be over quickly.

A week after the surgery, his office called with the results. They had achieved clean margins, but five lymph nodes were affected. This reclassified the tumor as stage 3, grade 1. There was now a concern about possible spread to vital organs, so I had to undergo another round of tests to rule that out. The four weeks I waited for the tests and the results felt like a year. Thankfully, the results showed no spread to my organs. However, because of the lymph node involvement, I had to add six cycles of chemotherapy to my treatment plan.

Chemotherapy was one of the hardest things I have ever had to endure. The hair loss, physical changes, extreme fatigue, excruciating pain, insomnia, appetite changes, memory issues, and weakened immune system were just a few of the challenges I faced. Radiation wasn't as harsh, but it completely drained my energy. I went from being very active to struggling to walk for 10 minutes.

Hormone therapy made me depressed and caused joint stiffness. The surgery also led to neuropathy. While many of the treatment side effects have since resolved, some still linger.

Cancer can be a lonely journey—even when you have people around you. I often felt uncomfortable expressing my emotions because I didn't want to seem ungrateful. After all, I caught it early, had access to world-class healthcare, and I survived. But the reality was that I couldn't work for almost a year. My Employment Insurance was cut off after 15 weeks, adding financial stress to an already overwhelming situation. I didn't want to tell friends and family because I didn't want them to worry or pity me.

I learned about and joined the African Cancer Support Group (ACSG) after I had completed the hardest part of my treatment. Still, it was incredibly comforting to hear from other survivors and caregivers who truly understood the journey and its emotional toll. I've also had the opportunity to encourage others who are at different stages of their fight. No one should walk this road alone.

Throughout this journey, I've experienced kindness and love from unexpected places. I've built new relationships and gained a deeper appreciation for the little things in life. I now understand how quickly life can change, and I no longer take anything for granted. I've also learned to be kinder to others—because not everyone looks like what they are going through.



MY STORY

ROSIE KAVINYA

I started the year 2023 with a Stage 2B, Grade 3 Triple-Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC) diagnosis in February. I was shocked, saddened, and deeply confused. Why me? I had never imagined something like this could happen—especially at a time when life seemed to be going so well.

I had just gotten married the previous year. I had a new baby—she was only nine months old when I was diagnosed. How was I going to take care of her? She needed me so much. My 12-year-old son was also heartbroken when he heard the news. I kept thinking: What would happen to my kids? They're too young to go through life without their mom.

I began treatment on March 1st. I was scared, but I prayed and surrendered everything into God's hands—and into the hands of my doctors. Throughout the year, I faced many ups and downs. I was admitted to the hospital twice due to post-chemo complications, but I overcame them with resilience and grace.

Eventually, we decided to tell our son the truth. I knew he would figure it out on his own, and I wanted him to hear it directly from me. He worried about me constantly. It was heartbreaking to see, but his love gave me strength. My husband was my rock through it all, and my family was simply amazing in their support. And GOD came through for me. In November 2023, I achieved Complete Pathological Response (CPR).

I fought this horrible disease with prayer, hope, and the determination to live—to live until I'm 120 years old if I can! I've been given a second chance, and I plan to make the most of it. I want to live each day like it's my last and appreciate even the smallest things I used to take for granted.
To everyone else out there fighting—I hope my story gives you hope.

Rosie Kavinya



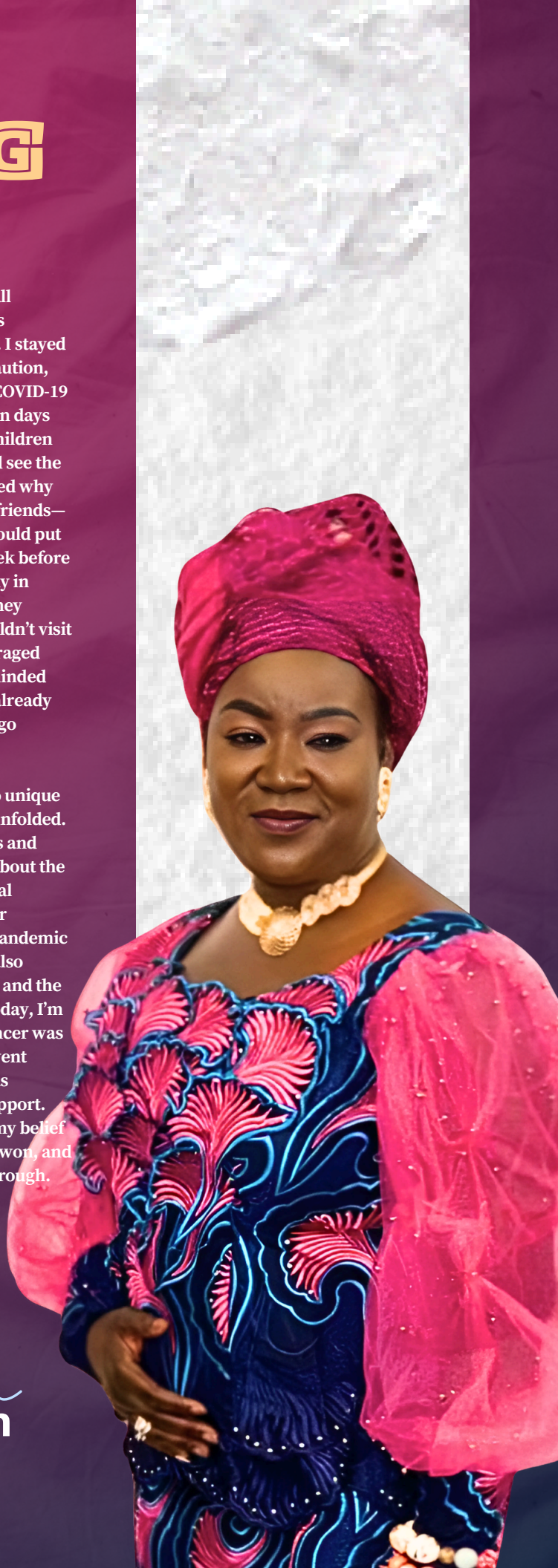
BOUNCING BEAR

My story is a unique one. I had been severely ill for about three weeks to a month with pneumonia, and during that time, I couldn't speak for nearly a week. After I recovered, my doctor ordered routine blood work three months later, even though I was no longer experiencing symptoms. The results showed that my TSH (Thyroid Stimulating Hormone) levels were slightly low. My doctor suggested I could get a thyroid ultrasound, though it wasn't urgent. I agreed, and the scan revealed a 2.5 cm lump on my thyroid. Though it didn't raise immediate concern, I chose to pursue further testing. I finally had a biopsy done on February 19, 2020, after being on the waiting list since November 2019.

By February 28, both my family doctor and an endocrinologist had called me multiple times. I told my husband, Bobby J, that they probably found something. When I visited my family doctor, she confirmed my fears: the biopsy showed the lump was malignant. I was stunned and kept thinking, "I don't even feel sick—how can I have cancer?" She explained that it might have been caused by radiation and reassured me it hadn't spread and was highly curable with an 80% survival rate. The only treatment option was surgery. A few days later, I saw the endocrinologist with my husband, and he confirmed everything. I met with the surgeon on my birthday, March 12, 2020, and was told the office would schedule the surgery. Just days later, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a national lockdown, making me anxious about whether the surgery would proceed.

Fortunately, I received a call confirming my surgery was scheduled for April 2, 2020. I stayed home and took every precaution, knowing that contracting COVID-19 could derail everything. Ten days before surgery, I told my children about my diagnosis. I could see the fear in their eyes. I explained why they couldn't go out to see friends—bringing home the virus would put my treatment at risk. A week before the surgery, I told my family in Edmonton, and although they panicked because they couldn't visit due to quarantine, I encouraged them to stay positive. I reminded myself that the battle was already won in spirit—I just had to go through the process.

What makes my journey so unique is how unexpectedly it all unfolded. I had no signs or symptoms and would never have known about the cancer without that optional ultrasound. Facing a cancer diagnosis during a global pandemic was overwhelming, but it also taught me resilience, faith, and the value of early detection. Today, I'm deeply grateful that the cancer was caught early, my surgery went ahead as planned, and I was surrounded by love and support. Through it all, I held onto my belief that the battle was already won, and that mindset carried me through.



Gifty Micah

Gifty Micah



THRIVING ACROSS GENERATIONS AND CONTINENTS

Multi-Generational Living

Multi-generational living is common across African cultures, mainly because family responsibility, reciprocity and connection are deeply rooted in our value system and beliefs. When my first son was born over 20 years ago, I felt overwhelmed and remember asking my mum how on earth she was able to raise 5 children while working full-time. She immediately reminded me that she almost aways had help from extended family. I remembered the African proverb that says, "It takes a whole village to raise a child". So, I promptly enlisted the help of my mother and, later, my mother-in-law to help me care for my children.

My sons had the privilege of eating hot, home-cooked meals and experiencing the loving care of their grandmothers. They got to build great memories with all four grandparents and learn our culture and family stories first-hand. In addition, my husband and I were spared the inconvenience, uncertainty, and exorbitant prices of professional childcare.

Seniors in Diaspora

Twenty years later, my sons are now young adults and mostly out of the house. The grandparents are now advanced in age and increasingly more dependent on us for home care and support while navigating the Canadian medical system. This season in our family comes with its own unique challenges, which are common among immigrant families.

Immigrant seniors are faced with the difficult choice of living with their children in diaspora so that they can get the personal care they need, though they often desire to be living in their own homes and enjoying a warmer climate. Additionally, Immigrant seniors without health care insurance are riddled with the guilt and fear of being a financial burden on their children. On the other hand, their children are concerned that they would be unable to adequately care and advocate for their parents if they were living alone in their home country.

In the summer of 2024, my mother-in-law (aka Grandma) was admitted to the hospital as she battled with cancer. Some of the challenges we faced were the lack of culturally appropriate care at the hospital and language barriers, even for an English-speaking senior. Medical terms need deep interpretation across languages. The Yoruba language, for example, has at least 6 words for pain, all of which do not directly translate to English words.

The nuances of faith and belief systems make it challenging to have difficult conversations about sickness, level of care, death, and estate planning, causing further dilemmas in caregiving and with a healthcare administration which expects that these conversations are a given. For example, getting Grandma to admit that she had cancer was impossible, and so we had to deal with the situation without saying the dreaded "C-word".

Finally, leveraging the typical care options for seniors is challenging for African families. Assisted living in a senior's home is such a foreign concept to our culture that it is often stigmatized as senior abandonment. And, even when families want to embrace assisted-living, socio-economic barriers make it challenging.

It takes a village

Amid our struggles we realized that, like childcare, it takes a village to navigate immigrant senior care in Canada. Thankfully, Grandma had built a loving community of church members and friends who rallied around us to support with her care. We are so grateful for the home cleaning and delicious African meals that African Cancer Support Group (ACSG) and Oladele foundation continues to provide as we now care for my mother who is recovering from a stroke and lives with us. We know that this is a season that we must navigate with community, compassion, and courage. Grandma passed away in the fall of 2024. While we miss her, we are at peace knowing that we had done our best to care for her as she faithfully cared for our children over the years.

Pele Williams

PELE WILLIAMS



WHAT I DIDN'T KNOW HURT ME

THE COST OF SILENCE IN HEALTH CRISES



I can distinctly remember what it was like when my mother had cancer in 2019. It felt like my life had barely changed but I knew something was terribly wrong based on the subtle differences in the family dynamic. I felt a similar change when I was told that my grandmother had cancer in 2020. While the severity of the situation was evident, I was kept in the dark.

If I were to describe my experiences with cancer in one word that word would be confusion. Never understanding the details, only hearing hushed conversation between family members, and ultimately, feeling afraid of what I simply did not understand. This confusion and fear stemmed from, what is in my opinion, a communication issue between immigrant parents, and immigrant children. Often, the dynamic between immigrant youth and parents can feel business like. "I'll bring home good grades and go to church, and in return you let me go out once in a while and buy me the new headphones I want." However, an unfortunate byproduct of this seemingly symbiotic relationship is the deterioration of deeper conversation, ultimately leading to the confusion I felt when my own mother battled through cancer. It is imperative that youth and parents have open conversation, especially during health crises. Understandably, this is incredibly difficult for both parties but is necessary and leads to a healthier processing of emotions for youth walking alongside a loved one as they battle through cancer.

Deji Williams

Deji Williams

MY PATIENT STORY

My name is Juliette Royer, but I go by Jules. I currently live in Guelph, Ontario. I was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma in December 2013. Myeloma is a blood cancer that is associated with the abnormal behaviour and uncontrolled growth of a type of white blood cell — the plasma cell. There is currently no cure for this cancer.

My myeloma was discovered when my kidney failed soon after my annual physical. I was on dialysis for several months while undergoing chemotherapy to prepare for my first stem cell transplant in May 2014. I remained on chemo maintenance for four years until the myeloma cells became uncontrollable again, prompting preparation for my second stem cell transplant, which took place in March 2019. Since then, I have been on another maintenance chemotherapy drug.

I joined the Halton-Peel Myeloma Support Group in 2015 and became a member of the steering committee later that year. I soon became co-leader. Wanting to establish a support group closer to home in Guelph, I helped co-found the Waterloo Region Myeloma Support Group and served as co-leader for both groups for many years. In 2021, after the passing of Norma Lindner, founder of the Halton-Peel Myeloma Support Group, I stepped in as Group Leader.

Over the years, I have been involved in countless Myeloma Canada initiatives, including volunteering at several Multiple Myeloma Marches in my area and serving as a media spokesperson for the events. I hope that through my patient journey video on Myeloma Canada's YouTube channel and a spotlight article for the Myeloma Matters e-newsletter, I have motivated and inspired the Canadian myeloma community.



Jules Royer

Jules Royer

A HEARTBEAT Away

BY GREI A.

The dim light of dawn crept through the curtains, casting a soft glow over my cluttered room. It was tranquil. So quiet in fact, I could hear my own heartbeat. I glanced at my phone, its white digits blinking 6:00 AM. Another day was beginning, and with it came the familiar routine of balancing my responsibilities as a premed student and a caregiver to my mom, who was battling breast cancer.

With a weary sigh, I pushed myself out of bed and tiptoed across the room, careful not to wake my sleeping mom. She lay still, her breathing steady, a frail figure amidst the sea of blankets. Cancer had stripped her of her strength, but not her spirit. Her body may be weak, but her heart was strong.

As I dressed for the day ahead, I couldn't shake the heavy weight that settled in my chest. How was I going to manage another day of lectures, Peer Learning Program (PLP), and caring for my mom? But then I remembered her gentle smile, the one that lit up her face every time she saw me. That smile was my fuel, my reason to keep going.

No time for breakfast. I gathered my books and headed to campus. The morning air was crisp, a stark contrast to the warmth of our home. With each step, my mind raced with thoughts of the day ahead. Physiology exam, followed by a tutoring session, and then rushing back home to make mom's favorite soup dish, Sinigang, for dinner.

Classes passed in a blur, my focus drifting between the professor's words and the worry gnawing at my mind. I scribbled notes furiously, determined not to let my grades slip, knowing that my dream of becoming a doctor depended on it.

As I handed my Physiology test to my professor, signaling the end of today's lectures, I hurried to the library. With my heart racing, I started to conduct my PLP tutoring session. Time was a luxury I couldn't afford to waste.

By the time I arrived home, the sun had begun its descent, painting the sky in hues of pink and orange. The familiar scent of Mom's cooking greeted me as I stepped through the door. She had beat me to it.

Mom was sitting at the kitchen table, a weak smile playing on her lips as she watched me enter. "How was your day, long?" she asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

I forced a smile, trying to hide the exhaustion that threatened to consume me. "It was good, Mom. Just busy, you know."

She reached out and gently squeezed my hand, her touch a balm to my weary soul. "You're doing so much for me, honey. I'm so proud of you."

Tears welled up in my eyes as I leaned in to hug her, my heart overflowing with love for this woman who had given me everything. "I'll always be here for you, Mama. No matter what."

And in that moment, amidst the chaos of our lives, I knew that no challenge was too great, as long as we faced it together. With my mom by my side, I would continue to chase my dreams—one heartbeat at a time.





SUZANNE Muako

I am Suzanne Muako, a very hard-working lady diagnosed with multiple myeloma a few years ago. This is how everything started.

My journey began in mid-2016, precisely in June. It all started when I was rushed to the emergency because of severe pain in my lower spine. This was not the first time I felt this debilitating pain. It was becoming so frequent that I got worried about my condition. I was prescribed a painkiller that helped to subside the pain each time. When the medication finished, I went to the pharmacy for a refill, and the pharmacist told me that I needed a prescription to get a refill. I immediately went to a family doctor not far from the pharmacy to get the prescription. When I got there, the doctor asked if he could check my health record since he was not my family doctor, and I accepted, as long as he would give me my prescription. Instead, he told me that he needed me to go and get an X-ray done before prescribing that particular medication. I told him I had done many X-rays in a short time, which is not very good for my body. He replied that he had noticed I had done 11 X-rays already but still needed one last one to confirm what he was suspecting. I left his clinic disappointed, without my medication. I was not ready to get another X-ray done, so I didn't go right away. A few days later, for a reason I cannot explain, I finally decided to go.

About 30 minutes after the X-ray was done, I received a call from the clinic asking me to come in because the doctor wanted to see me. I repeatedly said that I didn't have time that evening as I had an appointment with some people at my house. The lady on the phone told me to hold on because the doctor wanted to speak to me. When he came to the phone, he said, "Madame, I need to see you because you have cancer, and it's better you get here now so we can talk." That is how my life changed, as I got diagnosed with multiple myeloma. Immediately after my diagnosis, I was admitted to Foothills Hospital for a month because the medical team wanted to perform surgery to remove the tumour. During my stay at the hospital, I underwent a lot of examinations, which led to a change in the surgery plan.

The doctors decided instead to start chemotherapy treatment. I received chemotherapy for about six months. After that, I stopped chemo and started a stem cell transplant, which was even harsher for my body. The side effects were too devastating. This treatment almost killed me, as it burned my internal walls and burst my bile, making me feel almost incontinent. This was a terrible time in my life, but the nurses and doctors were so helpful and caring. They helped me through this challenging time, and I am grateful for such a great staff.

Due to the side effects, I stopped the treatment and gave my body some time to heal. A year after I was treatment-free, I started chemotherapy again, and I am still taking chemo currently. This journey has not been easy, and there were moments I felt broken and afraid, but I also experienced so much love, care, and support along the way. The medical team showed incredible compassion, and my body slowly began to recover. It has taken strength, patience, and faith to keep going, but I continue to push through, one day at a time, trusting that better days are ahead.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the Oladele Foundation for all their love and support throughout these difficult times. I would also like to thank my family for being there for me whenever I needed them and for all the prayers. Thanks to my friends for their endless love and support. And thanks most especially to Jehovah God for giving the doctors the knowledge to come up with various cancer treatments.

Suzanne Muako

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Could it be multiple myeloma?

Multiple myeloma, or myeloma, is the 2nd most common blood cancer that is still without a curefor now.
But thanks to tremendous innovations in research and new drug therapies, people with myeloma are living and enjoying their loved ones longer than ever before.

You are not alone.
Being diagnosed with cancer, any cancer, is frighteningand when the cancer is not that well-known, the feelings can be even more complex. There are so many emotions: shock, confusion, disbelief, denial, griefsome people even experience feelings of shame, as if the cancer is because of something they did or didnt do .

The signs and symptoms associated with myeloma are often vague.
Sadly, a diagnosis often takes longer than we'd like. So, if you or someone you know experiences unexplained severe bone pain, fatigue or anemia, recurring infections or kidney problems, ask if it could be myeloma. And remember, a myeloma diagnosis is nothing that you did or didn't do!

Myeloma Canada is proud to partner with the Oladele Foundation and the African Cancer Support Group to help you through all of the feelings, thoughts and emotions that come with a myeloma diagnosis.

MYÉLOME CANADA
MISSION : MAÎTRISER LE MYÉLOME

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AFRICAN CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
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Together, our goal is to let you know that you are not alone in your journey.
Every day there are 11 Canadians diagnosed with myeloma. Thats 4,015 new cases a year* and the number is on the rise. Along with our partnership with the Oladele Foundation, Myeloma Canada has free educational material, events and programs, support groups (including peer support), a monthly e-newsletter, personal stories of others impacted by myeloma, 100s of videos, and an amazing community of people living and caring for those with myeloma.

We're here to help you understand, cope and live better with your diagnosis. Whether youre recently diagnosed, in remission, experiencing a relapse, or youre a caregiver to someone living with myeloma, were here for you.

*Based on 2022 CCS statistics

Myeloma Canada is the only national charitable organization created by, and for, Canadians impacted by multiple myeloma. The organization is driven to improve the lives of those affected by myeloma by empowering the community through awareness, education and advocacy programs, and supporting clinical research to find a cure. Since it was founded in 2005, Myeloma Canada has been making myeloma matter. Learn more at myeloma.ca

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Introducing

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

The Caregiver Support Group is open to anyone caring for a loved one. It is a safe space for caregivers to connect, share, and combat loneliness.

"Caregiving is not just an act of service —it's a silent language of love, spoken through patience and sacrifice"
- Yinka Oladele

Who can join

- Open to all family caregivers, including informal or unpaid caregivers.
- Especially supportive of African, Black, and immigrant communities.
- A space built on confidentiality, respect, and mutual support, free of judgment.

What We Offer

- Peer support from others who understand
- Mental health check-ins
- Emotional, physical, material, & spiritual support
- Empowering wellness tips
- Compassionate, judgement-free conversations
- Workshops, Webinars, Events, etc.

Meeting Details

- Once every other month
- Inperson & virtual
- Scan the QR code to join the WhatsApp group.

Thank You:

Petro-Canada CareMakers Foundation™ | Fondation proches aimants Petro-Canada™

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Donate

secondchance@oladele.ca

Tax receipt for all donations.

www.thecaregiver.ca, www.oladele.ca



THE OLADELE FOUNDATION LEGACY FUND

The Oladele Foundation

A scholarship program supporting the children of cancer survivors



Cancer has left lasting emotional, physical, and financial scars. But out of that pain, we are planning **seeds of purpose**. The Oladele Foundation Legacy Fund is a scholarship initiative created to honour the strength of cancer survivors - and to uplift their children with the gift of education.

We believe that every child whose life has been touched by cancer deserves a fair shot at a bright future. Whether they've walked through the shadow of a parent's illness or grown up without one due to cancer's devastating impact, these children carry resilience in their DNA. We want to support their dreams.

> **"Legacy isn't about what we leave behind —it's about what we pass forward!"**
> **- Yinka Oladele**

IMPACT OF THE FUND:

- Provides educational scholarships to children of cancer survivors or those lost to cancer.
- Offers mentorship, school supplies, and back-to-school scholarships.
- Builds a network of hope, connecting families and youth navigating life after cancer

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Sponsor a child/children
- Give Monthly
- Donate in Memory of a Loved one
- Partner with Us as a Corporate Sponsor



Together, we have a legacy!



Donate via:
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www.oladele.ca
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African Cancer Support Group
www.africancancer.ca

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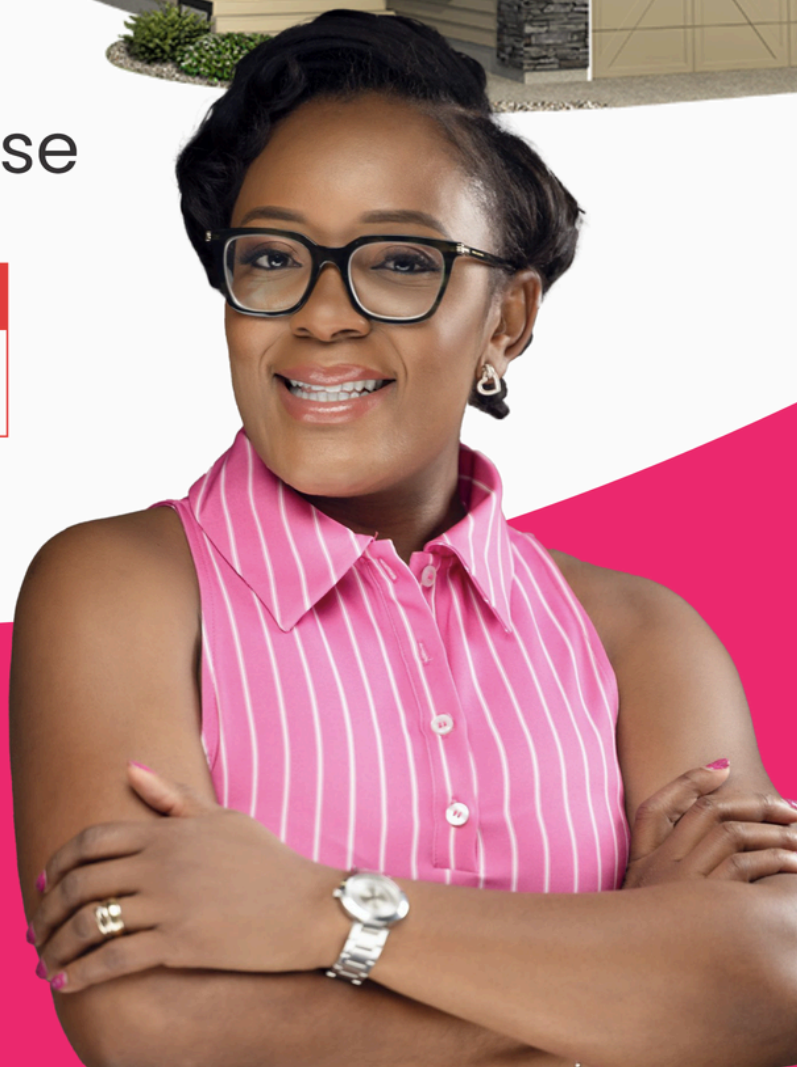

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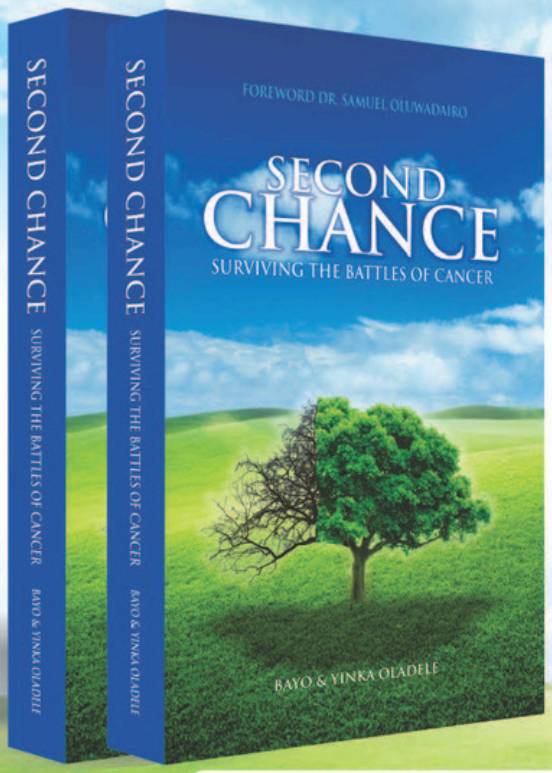

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No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands.

(NIV) Isaiah 65:22

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THURSDAY 21ST- SATURDAY 23RD AUGUST 2025

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IMPACT AREAS

The Oladele Foundation

AFRICAN CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
www.africancancer.ca

The Oladele Foundation through African Cancer Support Group provides culturally appropriate support services and bridges the gap between the hospital, cancer patients, survivors and caregivers



Community Education & Awareness

Organizing community education on cancer screening & awareness.



Turkyey Meal

Providing turkey meal during Easter, Thanksgiving, & Christmas.



Strategic Planning

Helping with continuous strategic planning to ensure the foundation is on course.



Social Media Strategy/ Campaigns

Helping with social media campaigns for visibility and reach more people.



Mental Health Support

Providing culturally appropriate mental health services.



Meal Delivery

Providing culturally appropriate meal during & after treatments.



Office Space

Helping to lease/rent an office space to serve members.



Miscellaneous

Helping with miscellaneous and other administrative expenses.



Celebrating Cancer Survivors

Celebrating cancer survivors and warriors in the community.



House Visit

Visiting patients and warriors and help with necessary resources, including transportation.



Personnel

Helping to hire, retain, and pay staff appropriately.



Complementary Therrapy

Providing massage, physio, accupunture, etc.



House Cleaning

Providing house cleaning for cancer patients & survivors to avoid infection and support caregivers.



Scholarships

Assisting students who are cancer patients, survivors, or caregivers by providing financial scholarships to support their academic journey.

PARTNER WITH US

The Oladele Foundation

AFRICAN CANCER SUPPORT GROUP
www.africancancer.ca




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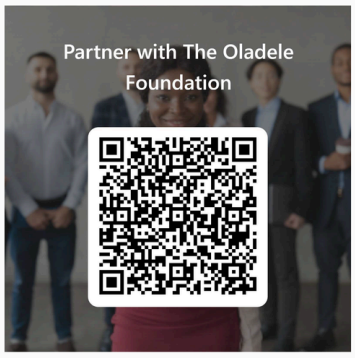



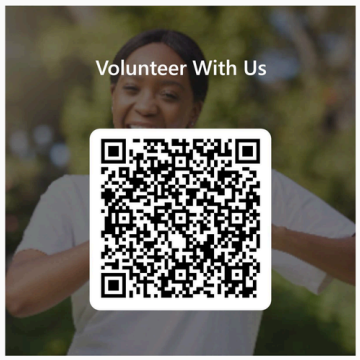

Get Involved!

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS
TO HELP US ORGANIZE

ACSG RUN FOR HOPE







PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

ARE YOU OF AFRICAN OR LATIN AMERICAN DESCENT?

We are looking to learn about your experiences of equity and wellness when living with cancer

ARE YOU?

- 18 years or older
- Self-identify as a Latin American, African, Caribbean or Black
- Have cancer or care for someone with cancer*
- Or are a community member

WHAT TO EXPECT

- An individual or group conversation
- A short anonymous survey

We can speak selected African languages or Spanish

*Spouses or caregivers who are not of African or Latin American descent are welcome to participate in the study

CONTACT US

(780) 492-8185

ewcc@ualberta.ca

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Canadian Cancer Society

This study has been approved by the Health Ethics Research Board of Alberta Cancer Committee Certificate [HREBA.CC 22-0373].

This research is funded by a Health Equity Research Grant from the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS grant #707676)

Canadian Cancer Society

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

ARE YOU OF AFRICAN OR LATIN AMERICAN DESCENT?

Self-identify as a Latin American, African, Caribbean or Black

We are looking to learn about your experiences accessing palliative care

ARE YOU?

- 18 years or older
- Have cancer or care for someone with cancer*
- Interested in increasing access to palliative care

WHAT TO EXPECT:

- 1-hour interview
- A short anonymous survey

We can speak selected African languages or Spanish

*Spouses or caregivers who are not of African or Latin American descent are welcome to participate in the study

Palliative care is an approach to promote people's well-being through the relief of symptoms and other health-related issues in people with advanced cancer

IF INTERESTED PLEASE CONTACT US:

(780) 492-8185 apcc@ualberta.ca

This study has been approved by the Health Ethics Research Board of Alberta Cancer Committee [Certificate #HREBA. CC-22-0351]

This research is funded by an Accelerator Grant of the Canadian Cancer Society (grant #707648)



A Community-Based Participatory Action Research to Improve Breast Cancer Screening for Black Women in Alberta

Share your experiences, thoughts, or concerns about breast cancer screening. Your insights can help shape better breast cancer screening services and stronger community support.

This Project is in Collaboration with the African Cancer Support Group (ACSG).

- ☑ Join a focus group or conversation café to share your insight.
- ☑ Share your pespectives in a safe, supportive space.
- ☑ Shape policies and healthcare strategies that promote health equity

CONTACT US

black.racialized@ucalgary.ca
info@africancancer.ca.

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

AFRICAN CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Canadian Cancer Society

BARE Black and Racial Equity

This study is funded by the Canadian Cancer Society and has been approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board.

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Our mission is to spread the message of God's love and grace, empowering individuals to live purposefully and victoriously. This is achieved through dynamic worship, inspiring sermons, and a variety of community outreach programs that fulfill our corporate social responsibilities as we make a positive impact on the lives of those around us.

Join us at RCCG Christ Embassy and experience the transformative power of God's presence.

Shalom



PASTORS
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ODIASE

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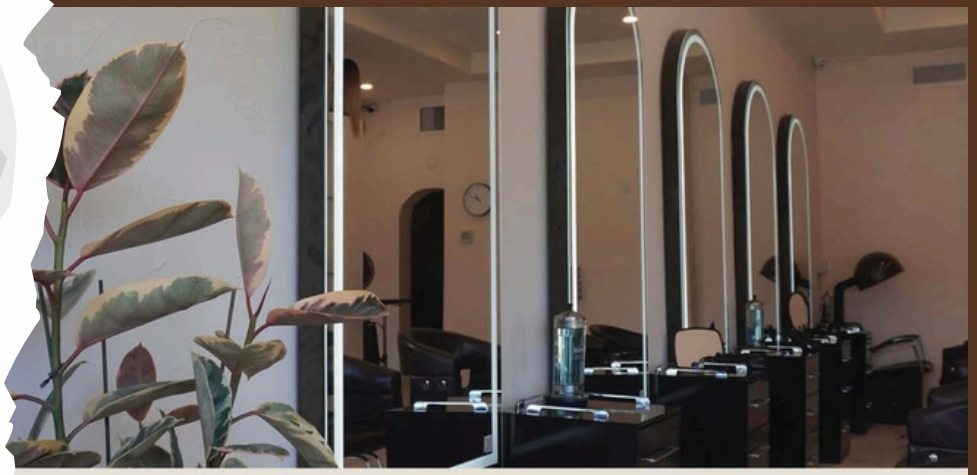



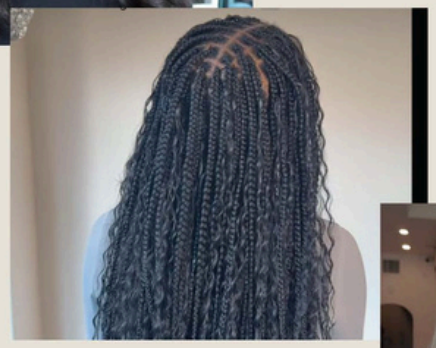

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ACSG MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

ACSG provides a safe and supportive space with free professional counseling, open to ACSG members, caregivers, children, and family members



for further information:
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FOR COMMUNITY, FOREVER
WHEN WE EACH DO A LITTLE,
A LOT GETS DONE.
CALGARY

Thank You!

Thank you, Calgary Foundation, for believing in our mission and standing with us on this journey. Your generous grants create lasting change and uplift Calgarians of African descent. Your unwavering commitment is truly invaluable, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration to make an even greater impact

We are deeply grateful to Petro-Canada CareMakers Foundation for believing in our mission and standing with us on this journey. Through their generous grants, they empower us to support caregivers—helping those who dedicate themselves to caring for others receive the recognition, resources, and assistance they deserve.

We are incredibly grateful to CACC for partnering with us to provide scholarships for the children of cancer survivors. Your generosity and commitment show just how much the community cares, offering these families hope, opportunity, and the support they truly deserve.

Thank you to Pfizer for making it possible for members from across Canada to attend our event. Your generous support covered transportation and accommodation, ensuring a meaningful and inclusive gathering. We deeply appreciate your contribution and look forward to many more collaborations ahead!

We appreciate the Government of Alberta for its generous support, enabling members from across the province to attend this event. Your commitment to cancer support in the African/Black community is invaluable, and we look forward to continued collaboration in strengthening these efforts.

Thank you to our monthly donors, one-time donors, fundraisers - African Choice Market, Rhay Logistics, Brookes College, Techsenssial, The UPS Store #45, as well as the many businesses and individuals who support us. Your generosity and continued commitment make a lasting impact, and we deeply appreciate you!

JOIN THE MOVEMENT!

Join us in this movement to raise awareness, provide culturally appropriate services, support caregivers, offer scholarships to students, and sustain our vital operations. Together, we can make a lasting impact in our community! *Tax receipt provided.*

2025 Cancer Survivors Day Event Sponsors & Partners

The Oladele Foundation

Support, Awareness
Collaboration, Education
& Fundraising

AFRICAN CANCER SUPPORT GROUP



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