



# Gratitude

IS THE BEST ATTITUDE

By Marcia Gurche



*“Piglet noticed that even though he had a Very Small Heart, it could hold a rather large amount of Gratitude.”*

-- AA Milne



When it was time to leave the Capuchin Retreat Center at the end of our **Girls' Get-Away Weekend** this past October, a few of us remarked on feeling an overwhelming amount of *gratitude*. We felt grateful for the opportunity to hear some wonderful speakers share their wisdom and expertise with us, for the chance to relax in a beautiful and tranquil setting, and to have some delicious meals provided for us. More importantly, however, we felt overwhelmingly grateful for the time we had to spend with so many amazing women. **Patty Kurpinski** mentioned to me that we needed to write an article on *gratitude* for our newsletter. I totally agreed with her. As is the case with many other cancer survivors, *gratitude* became much more a part of my life following my cancer diagnosis. I was grateful to wake up each day and to be able to see the beautiful sky and birds and trees and flowers, which I hate to admit I barely noticed before. When I joined the *One to One* support group, I was immediately cognizant of the strength of so many of the ladies who were happy and productive and who always exuded attitudes of *gratitude*. Whether they were cancer free or in the throes of a recurrence, the examples set by so many of the ladies in the support group never ceased to amaze me.

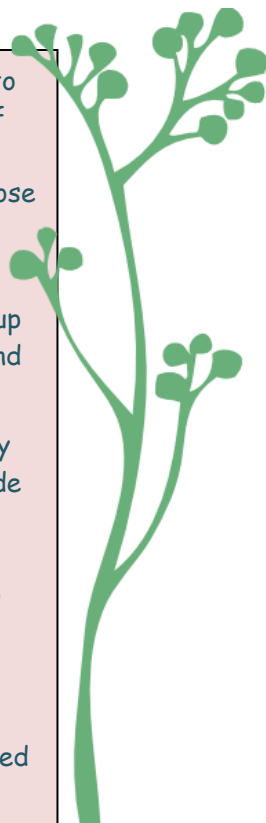
After Patty suggested including an article on *gratitude*, I began to notice that word popping up repeatedly in various places. In particular, the topic of gratitude was prominent in a Free Press article that was written by **Maureen Feighan**. I like to read her articles because her father was a priest who served at the parish where I went to high school. He later left the priesthood and started a family, and his daughter happens to be a down to earth writer who I feel connected with. At any rate, Maureen's *gratitude* article was bittersweet because it told the story of her darling special needs daughter who was soon to celebrate her sixteenth birthday.

*One to One* is devoted to the on-going support of those newly diagnosed, those in remission and those in recurrence.

100% of contributions directly benefit our group by providing activities and paying for expenses.

Donations are gratefully accepted and can be made by check payable to **One to One Ovarian Cancer Support Group** c/o Marilyn Brozovic  
4793 Alton Dr.  
Troy, MI 48085

A receipt will be provided for tax purposes.



When this child was born with a rare genetic condition, Maureen and her husband were grateful because they had previously experienced the loss of their first-born child. The prognosis for their new daughter, Hope, was not good, but Maureen and her husband are very grateful because she has exceeded all expectations. While she will never talk, get married, live on her own, or do “normal” things, they are grateful because Hope is able to walk and attend school, she is funny, and happy, and she interacts with others. Maureen has learned how to find joy in her daughter's small accomplishments and to enjoy the everyday experiences. While she has experienced grief, she also has an abundance of *gratitude* for the happiness she feels every day that her daughter lives.

People like Maureen Feighan and the amazingly resilient ladies in our *One to One* support group are finding happiness because they choose to find it. It is not easy among the constant rounds of treatment and the horrible side effects that accompany them. They are embracing beauty in nature and appreciating the beauty that surrounds them. Maya Angelou's quote is so appropriate:

*“This is a wonderful day. I have never seen this one before.”*

# PROFILE IN *Courage*

By Marcia Gurche and Nina Hamilton

**N**ina Hamilton's ovarian cancer diagnosis in June of 2022 felt to her like an out of body experience. Like most women diagnosed with ovarian cancer, she began experiencing symptoms several months prior, yet the source was unrecognized. Being an active person and used to doing water aerobics three times a week, she was happy when she began losing weight and she readily agreed with her doctor that the pull in her side was probably a muscle, due to her rigorous exercise routine. The physical therapy treatment did not correct it, however, and she noticed her stomach getting larger. She went into "Nina mode" and attempted to figure out what was causing the various issues that she was having. When even YouTube and Google could not help her, she ended up in the emergency room where, after multiple tests, she was told that she had ovarian cancer.

Nina is a very spiritual person, and her faith has helped her through this journey. She considers herself a miracle and, while she realizes that everyone handles their diagnosis differently, she chose to focus on healing only and not the diagnosis. For that reason, she shared the news of her diagnosis with only about ten like-minded faith believing people. She did not want any negative input or unwanted opinions. Her treatment consisted of six rounds of carboplatin and Taxol and then a total debulking hysterectomy with bowel re-sectioning. Six more rounds of carbo and Taxol followed with Avastin added. She has completed treatment now but continues to receive Avastin as maintenance every three weeks. She relied on God's promise of healing, and He delivered and restored. She recovered well from both her surgery and treatments, and not many people other than those closest to her were aware of what she was going through.

Nina was blessed to be raised in a loving home by her paternal grandparents, **Mattie and Grant Friley**. Her grandpa was a Baptist minister and her grandma was thrilled to have a little girl to fuss over after raising two boys of her own. Nina's parents were young and unwed when she was born and not equipped to care for her. Nina was spoiled as a child, but her grandma told her she was "sweetly spoiled," in self-defense, since she had done the spoiling. While she was a self-proclaimed tomboy, Nina did acquiesce often and wore a fair share of fancy church dresses and accessories as grandma would have it no other way. Grandma insisted on always being a lady. In school, Nina played tennis and basketball, played piano in the jazz band, sang in the concert choir, and participated in the modern jazz dance troupe. Her grandma was a "cool grandma" and used to ride on the bus with the basketball team and even shake a pom-pom.



*Nina with family,  
two days before her diagnosis.*



Following graduation from Cooley High School, Nina attended Michigan State University where she earned a Packaging Engineering degree. She went on to get a Master's in Business from Central Michigan University. In her sophomore year at Michigan State University, Nina married her childhood sweetheart, **Michael**. Two years later she had her daughter, **Mikaela**. Mikaela is the mother of Nina's two grandchildren, **Malachi**, 20 years, who attends Oakland Community College and **Kayla**, 17 years, who is a senior at L'Anse Cruise High School. While Nina and Michael are no longer married, they have remained good friends and still celebrate holidays together and even send each other texts on the date of their wedding anniversary for fun.

Nina's engineering career took her to several different companies including Ford, Chrysler, Lear, and Nissan. She was the first black female engineer at Nissan North America. While still working as an engineer, she started two

other businesses. She became a licensed Life and Health Insurance agent, and she also got into the income tax business. She is still active in both businesses. Nina once again felt so blessed as she began working for Quicken Loans in 2017 as a mortgage broker, account executive, and underwriter. In May 2022 she took an incentive buy out which included a good medical package and cash. One month later, she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer.

Most of us would sit back and relax following a diagnosis like Nina had, especially considering that she is close to retirement age. Nina being Nina, however, has decided to keep on keeping on. Thus, she will be working for H & R Block this coming tax season. While she loves to watch YouTube, she does not want to watch too much of it...so, she chooses to keep busy. She loves to eat, but not really to cook. She loves the water and loves to go down to the Detroit River Walk and enjoy the water in good weather. She likes to exercise and ride her bike and to do water aerobics. She still plays the piano and sings, a talent God gave her at the age of seven.

Nina has done a lot of traveling in her career as an engineer, including many trips internationally. As a child she traveled to most of the states in the United States when her grandparents would go for national church related conventions, and they would make a family vacation out of it.

Nina's doctor, Dr. McKool, told her to "live your life" and that is what Nina does. She is very involved in her church, Restoration Fellowship Tabernacle, and her faith and positivity are evident whenever she talks. She finds a silver lining in most everything. For instance, upon discharge from the hospital after her surgery, she stopped at the grocery store to pick up yogurt. When she bent down to get it, she fainted. Back in the ER, blood clots were discovered which would never have been found if she had not fainted. Nina feels that God is truly looking over her. I believe she is right, but I also believe that Nina is very tenacious and hardworking and she lives life to the fullest.

Nina never asked God "Why me?" but rather, "Why now, at age sixty-three?" His response was *"Because everything and everybody you were going to need would be in alignment. I get the glory and you get to tell your healing story."* 🌈



## WE HELPED!

The **Sterling Heights Community Center** dedicated a beautiful, 30 panel glass mosaic mural in a ribbon cutting ceremony on June 6<sup>th</sup>. This lovely mural, called "Share the Trail," was created by **Mary Giluly**, who is from the Song and Spirit organization. Mary created the mural with the help of 130 members of the Sterling Heights community and even some of the *One to One* support group members. We were honored to have been asked to participate in constructing one of the panels during the March workshop, which Mary so graciously put on for our support group.

One to One's dahlia !





Nothing says "good times" like these smiling faces!  
Photo taken at the December 2<sup>nd</sup> Holiday Luncheon at  
The Masters Restaurant.



## HAPPY SURVIVORSary

*January*

Molly Goodman	28 yrs!
Jen Poore	28
Elaine Greenberg	24
Patty Kurpinski	16
Nancy Evanson	12
Janice Murphy	9
Nancy Nordlie	9
Barb Wenninger	9
Alyson Denyer	8
Nancy Minckler	2

## meeting

Group meetings are held on  
the **2nd Thursday**  
of the month at **4 pm**.

Meetings are in-person at the  
**Berkley Public Library** and  
are also held via Zoom.

You are welcome to join us for  
dinner following the meeting  
at *The Avenue Restaurant*,  
located on Woodward  
just north of 13 Mile.

**January 11**  
**February 8**  
**March 14**

Newsletter information is  
presented in summary form, is  
general in nature and provided  
for informational purposes only.  
It is not intended in any way to  
be a substitute for professional  
medical advice, diagnosis or  
treatment.

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Foundation).



## HAPPY SURVIVORSary

*February*

Ella Steele	15 yrs!
Laurie Clark	7
Karen Simister	4

### *Objectives of support group:*

- ✦ *Provide a forum for ovarian cancer patients to address concerns;*
- ✦ *Support each other through initial treatment phase, during potential recurrence, and with issues related to long term survival;*
- ✦ *Establish core group of survivors willing to visit newly diagnosed patients;*
- ✦ *Increase awareness of ovarian cancer, including its symptoms and risk factors, in the hope of achieving earlier detection and treatment.*