

Linda Pabst speaks openly about her battle with cancer

By Mark Pavilons

Roughly two in five Canadians will develop cancer in their lifetime. And one-quarter will die of the disease.

No one fully appreciates taking on this ultimate battle unless you're faced with it.

Just ask Councillor Linda Pabst.

Looking at Linda today, a little over a week since her last cancer treatment, you'd think nothing was wrong. She's bubbly and has that certain sparkle in her eye that belies the severity of her journey.

It comes down to inner strength and a positive attitude. While that may sound cliché, it's true, and Linda's doctors are



quite impressed with her recovery.

She's laying low for a while, simply to avoid being exposed to any germs since her immune system is still compromised. There will be plenty of time for hugs later.

'I hope I never hear the word 'cancer' again,' she said defiantly.

She also attributes the tremendous support from family, friends and neighbours as a source of strength. Her family members were beside her all the way.

'The support I've had is amazing,' she said. 'The phone calls have meant so much.' From kind offers, bouquets and well wishes, 'everyone's been great.'

She thanks her constituents for their patience in her responding to calls and concerns during this time.

Attitude and a strong support team are instrumental in a cancer patient's ordeal. 'It's so very important,' she added.

The staff at Southlake Regional Health Centre were great and kept her upbeat and informed throughout her treatments. They provided awareness training and doctors were always available to answer questions and concerns. Staff were 'absolutely amazing.'

She went from being 'scared skinny' to a strong, assertive survivor.

Going through such a scare really does change your priorities in life. And her advice to others is the often-heard 'live every day as if it's your last and don't take anything for granted.'

Linda also learned another valuable lesson 'just how important she is to others.

Her 15-year-old cat would agree, and he hasn't left her side.

She will never forget the day she got the terrible news, the worst thing anyone will ever yearn for: 'you have cancer.'

That was February 8.

The diagnosis followed a routine checkup, MRI and biopsy.

The day she found out she went to council as usual. When she ran into fellow Councillor Bill Cober, she broke down and 'fell apart.' Her colleagues, both councillors and staff, were so very supportive.

She had plans to travel to Florida with a friend and the two hopped in a car the next day for their anticipated getaway. Roughly six hours into the trip, Linda's phone began ringing with doctors requesting tests and beginning a treatment schedule.

That lightning fast response 'blew me away,' she admitted. 'It was a whole lot to take in.'

They turned around and she's glad she did.

Her radiation treatment thinned her hair a bit, and 'whacked the heck out of me.' She also had a pick line bottle she could wear around her neck for the chemo therapy. She was lucky in that she could return home every day.

But that doesn't mean those six weeks of treatment were a picnic, not by any means.

She's getting stronger every day, and her walks are getting longer. Her doctors see her as one tough cookie. She's not sure. She must have done something right in her life.

Linda Pabst has a long service to this community, as King's most veteran councillor.

She can now proudly add 'cancer champ' to her list of accomplishments.