



Brenda Cartmel  
Volunteer 2015, 2014 and 2012

Brenda Cartmel was only 21 when she began her career as a nurse in Liverpool, England on the cancer ward. She cared for young people her age or younger and watched many of them lose their fights. The experience moved her and ultimately led her to work as a cancer epidemiologist at Yale, where part of her work involves evaluating the benefits of exercise for cancer survivors. Her own battle with cancer and her dedication to the Closer to Free Ride were still yet to come.

Many years later, Brenda had two children in middle and elementary school and she was stunned to learn that she had breast cancer. “My experience of chemotherapy and radiation at Yale was so much better than I had nursed in England due in large part to all the new, amazing supportive therapies I received,” she recalls. She has been amazed by the remarkable improvements in cancer research and care that are the hard work of those in cancer research, patients participating in clinical trials, the advocacy community, and the monies that enabled this amazing work to be done. “I volunteer for the Closer to Free Ride to honor the memories of those patients I nursed all those years ago,” she says, “to support cancer patients and survivors and to help those trying to make the world become Closer to Free.”

Brenda has a blast volunteering at the Chester rest stop, which is the half way mark for those dedicated riders doing the 100-mile Closer to Free Century. “It is great to be able to tell the riders that it is all down hill from Chester and show them their progress on the map to encourage especially those doing the 100-miles for the first time,” she says. Her team cheers each rider as they arrive and leave the rest stop as well as provide much needed food and hydration. “I find it a very uplifting experience,” she says. “It is fun to be a part of the awesome team, many of whom are there ever year, and it is amazing to see the dedicated riders who come through and help so many to be Closer to Free!”

So when you're at the Chester Rest Stop and hear the lilt of an English accent, say hello to Brenda Cartmel: survivor, researcher and volunteer rock star for Closer to Free.

