



Yvette Larrieu  
Cyclist 2016 and 2015

Cancer has been a part of Yvette Larrieu's family for generations. She has lost her mother, her grandmother and her uncle. She has lost friends and mentors. And last year, when she had had enough, she rode Closer to Free. She didn't know that she too would soon experience Smilow as a patient.

When Yvette was ten years old, her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer in both breasts. After a radical double mastectomy seemingly put her in the clear, seven years later her cancer had metastasized in her bones. Less than a year after that, Yvette lost her mom after a valiant fight.

Yvette's father lost his mother to cancer when he was only thirteen years old and his eldest brother to the disease at a young age. "I never knew those two people who were so important in my father's life," she says. More recently, she has seen too many women in their 40's and 50's -- the prime of life -- succumb to cancer. "I want to cry when I think about the lives lost, women who were funny and fierce, who had contributed so much to their families, communities, and the world they lived in," she says. "For those who have luckily survived, it has changed each and every one of their lives."

After all this cancer in her life, Yvette decided to ride Closer to Free last year. This year, she'll ride again and her spouse decided to ride with her after experiencing the 2015 Ride as a supporter.

"The scourge of cancer has now affected me in a very personal way," she says. "This past October, in consultation with my doctors at Smilow, I had a prophylactic double mastectomy with reconstructive surgery." Although the decision to have this major surgery was not an easy one for Yvette to make, she credits the team at Smilow as an invaluable resource in arriving at that decision. After years of many biopsies and numerous false positives, she now no longer has that impending fear of a diagnosis.

"I'm grateful I had options and I want to make certain that other people will have options too," she says. "Together we CAN and WILL defeat cancer."

