



Marian Brodney
Cyclist 2016 and 2015

Like so many, Marian Brodney has been touched by cancer in many, many ways. She states clearly “Cancer isn’t fair.” She is the youngest of five children in a close-knit family and we wanted you to hear her moving and powerful story in her own words...

My senior year in high school my brother, a senior in college, was diagnosed with stage 3 Hodgkin’s disease. This prognosis rocked my foundation because to me, cancer was something “old people” suffered from—this made no sense. My brother stayed home for treatment and returned to school, once in remission, and graduated the following year. Living with him during treatment showed me how ugly the disease can be. It was something that could hit anyone—even a young man in his prime.

The following year, I lost my paternal Grandfather to prostate cancer, diagnosed late in life, and the largest contributing factor to his rapid decline. Four years later my maternal Grandmother was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. We lost her so quickly—before we were really able to accept her prognosis—she passed after just 4 short months. Six years later, my father was diagnosed and treated for prostate cancer and was thankfully in remission. But cancer struck again, 10 years later, after celebrating his 70th birthday. My father was diagnosed with a rare stomach cancer—Linitis Plastica. He fought valiantly—he had so much to live for and so desperately wanted more time with our family—but the disease took him within the year.

Cancer isn’t fair. And cancer doesn’t care. I miss my dad every day. And not long after losing my dad, my oldest brother was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer at the age of 50. Thankfully, he is one of the lucky ones—he has survived and just celebrated his 55th birthday, thankfully in remission, but not without the scars of his battle.

And then there’s Madeline. Sweet Madeline.

We met the Guarraia family when Madeline and my daughter Abby were about 2 years old and Amie (Madeline’s mother) was pregnant with Julianne (Madeline’s younger sister). We always enjoyed spending time with them when our schedules allowed. We were horrified when Madeline was diagnosed with Leukemia at age 4 and watched in awe as she fought her first battle with cancer and WON! But this wasn’t the end.... the horror was even greater when 3 short years later we learned she had developed treatment-related AML. How could this happen to such an awesome little girl? Such a sweet and loving family? Not once, but twice? Why? Because cancer isn’t fair.

Madeline fought so bravely and her family shared every step of their journey so openly--and it was such an amazing triumph when her PERFECT match (10 out of 10) was uncovered in her baby brother Anthony. This was the answer they had all been waiting for. That we all had been hoping they would find. The surgery went well and little 18-month-old Anthony was a hero. Madeline even posted a picture holding a “Cancer Free” sign just last June. Madeline even came out to see team Mad About Madeline at mile 40 in the 2015 CTF Ride at the Guilford stop. We took pictures, exchanged hugs and talked about how Madeline would ride with us in 2016 because she had beaten AML! But maybe there is something behind that saying—“if it seems too good to be true, it probably is.” Madeline’s cancer came back....again. After 6 months of being cancer free, AML was back and it was even tougher this time. Despite fighting as hard as her little body would allow, Madeline couldn’t beat cancer a third time and she passed on April 6th. This shouldn’t be the end of her story, and it won’t be because those that knew and loved her will carry on her legacy. But this shouldn’t be the end to anyone’s story.

I have experienced cancer as a sister, a granddaughter, a daughter and through Amie’s openly shared journey, I felt the disease as a mother.

I ride because cancer has taken so many loved ones away before their time. I ride because I know that only research can help lead to positive outcomes and treatment. I ride because I can.

