



Kate Holthausen
Volunteer 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012

Kate Holthausen watched the first CTF Ride roll by Smilow Cancer Hospital, as she was there caring for her grandson who was in treatment. She's had a long history with cancer, including her own battle with breast cancer. Now a 4-year CTF Ride volunteer, we want you to hear Kate's story and motivation in her own words.

My journey with cancer started almost 45 years ago when my grandfather was diagnosed with lung cancer. I was a young adult at the time, married and pregnant with my first child. I think my grandfather was trying to hang on until his first great-grandchild was born as he passed away on my due date in May 1972.

My mother was also diagnosed with stage four brain cancer in 1989 and passed away a little less than one year later. Mom was an amazing mother, grandmother and friend.

Even though I have tried to keep myself healthy by eating the right foods, exercising and not drinking or smoking, I was diagnosed with stage one breast cancer in 2005. I was treated with radiation and then after about 9 months after being told the cancer was gone, it came back. This time it was a more aggressive treatment with chemo and radiation.

Being one of seven daughters and having three daughters of my own I have been more than adamant to make sure that scans are done on time and to continue the healthy lifestyle I had been accustomed to.

While I had prayed that cancer would never strike my daughters, I never in my life expected to hear the words "Your grandchild has brain cancer." That late August day in 2011 was the worst day of my life as I watched my daughter with her only son, and wished that there was something I could do to make this horrible dream go away.

It didn't go away and we spent that September morning watching bicycles ride by the Smilow Cancer Hospital during the first Closer to Free Ride. I knew at that time that I would participate the following year, hopefully riding but more realistically volunteering at the event.

I know what it's like to hear those four words for my daughter, and myself and we were not going to take this battle lying down. The beast of cancer had found our 2-year-old boy, Patrick James, our joy, our miracle and our only grandchild. There were times during that 8 month period that we would hear nurses argue over who was going to take care of the cute little bald boy who called himself Pat Pat before surgery and after he re-learned how to talk, walk, and get his bearings, he would continue to rock the red fedora and that rock star smile and our slogan became Born to Fight.

This year will mark the fifth year since our journey at Smilow began and Patrick is a totally normal seven-year-old boy. He may have some delays, but is learning so quickly.

Why do I participate in Closer to Free? It's the feeling that we are ALL doing something to beat this beast. Having had a cancer diagnosis -- seeing your parent, sister, brother, grandparent, aunt, uncle and sadly even grandchild -- it makes you want to make it go away for good. We are all here for our own specific reason, whatever it is -- you are making a difference in people's lives -- Smilow saved my grandson and I will be forever grateful for that -- I will crew, volunteer and do whatever I can to make sure that every single person at every event knows that they have made a difference and that it will all be for something good.

That's why I am here.
Kate Holthausen

