

—2024— FACES OF H♥PE

ANGLEA ALSTON

Making Strides Against
Breast Cancer of Baltimore 10.26.24
at Camden Yards Lot. C



Faces of Hope Making Strides Baltimore – Angela Alston

Angela was diagnosed with HER2 triple positive breast cancer in December 2022. The results of her mammogram revealed a tumor in her left breast and in her auxiliary lymph node. A biopsy confirmed both tumors were malignant. With her type of breast cancer and a spread to the lymph node required aggressive treatment, which consisted of Chemotherapy before and after surgery, surgery to remove the malignant tumors (breast tumor and 2 lymph nodes), and Radiation treatment. Angela completed her treatment in April 2024.

Breast cancer has tested my faith, my strength and my mental stability. My family and friends were always there to support and encourage me. I want people to know that when breast cancer treatment ends the journey is not over, there are long lasting physical and mental side effects. This journey has taught me the importance of advocating for yourself. As I move forward I want to make a difference in the lives of those diagnosed with this disease, through political policy advocacy, helping others through their survivorship, raising awareness about breast cancer prevention and supporting groups that are involved in breast cancer research.

My advice those newly diagnosed or those in survivorship is to stay positive, learn everything you can about your disease, you are your best advocate! There are many traditional and complementary treatments available...seek all your options. If you are not comfortable with your care plan let your healthcare team know. Most of all live your life to the fullest!

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ERIKA BUFFALOE

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Faces of Hope Making Strides Baltimore – Erika Buffaloe

Thanks to her weight loss, Erika found the lump in her breast that led to her breast cancer diagnosis. She had recently lost 40 pounds, so her breasts felt different. She checked herself and discovered the lump.

Erika underwent lumpectomy along with a breast reduction, lymph node removal, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and oral chemotherapy.

“Being diagnosed with breast cancer can be earth shattering,” she says. “I remember the day I felt my entire life change. I made a conscious decision to find the joy each day and count it. My stylist cut my long locs via a live stream, which opened up an outlet where I learned women were quietly suffering alone, afraid to talk about their diagnosis and fears, and they saw me. I became the advocate I never expected and partnered with other women and groups to paint a beautiful picture of the fight against breast cancer.

Each day we have opportunities filled with possibilities that all are purposeful. My story is a wonder and there is power in sharing it transparently. I chose Making Strides because the American Cancer Society shows compassion and insight on how to become motivated. ACS has resources to help those who are battling breast cancer.”

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BONITA FISHER

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Faces of Hope Making Strides Baltimore – Bonita Fisher

Bonita's journey is a testament to screening. A two-time breast cancer survivor, she was diagnosed for the first time thanks to her annual mammogram. In 2005, she underwent chemotherapy and radiation as well as a mastectomy with reconstruction. In 2024, she had a lumpectomy and proton treatments.

Bonita is on hormone treatment therapy to help prevent a recurrence. Both her immediate family and work family supported through her cancer journey. "I'm very thankful and blessed to have these people by my side while going through this journey. They encouraged me to never give up," she says. She also advocates for others going through the cancer journey. "Knowing that I can inspire others to fight and stay strong and help those going through breast cancer or any cancer makes me hopeful," she says.

Her advice: "Early detection is key. Be sure to get your annual mammogram and don't be afraid to ask questions if you feel or see differences in your breast. I chose to join Making Strides because they have resources for us to use and guide us to be strong."

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TARLETHA GARDNER

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Faces of Hope Baltimore- Tarlethea Gardner

Tarlethea was first diagnosed in 2017 at the young age of 36 after discovering a knot in her breast. Just five years later, she experienced back pain that sent her to the doctor. She requested to have a PET scan that revealed liver lesions. She now says, "I am still in treatment. I consider myself a chemo lifer due to my stage 4 diagnosis. My amazing husband and four beautiful children are my backbone. They take me to my appointments, make me smile, and assist me when I have bad days.

Her advice is, "Never give up on yourself no matter what news you receive from the doctor. Hold them to their oath to assist you and treat you. Be seen as soon as possible." Tarlethea says that she joined Making Strides Against Breast Cancer of Baltimore, "to meet other people fighting the battle and be around positivity."

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NICOLE HELWIG

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Faces of Hope Making Strides Baltimore – Nicole Helwig

Nicole is one of those uncommon stories of a new mother being diagnosed with breast cancer. During a diaper change, her baby boy kicked her in a spot on her breast where a benign lump had been diagnosed the year before. The spot hurt, so Nicole talked to her doctor. A biopsy revealed cancer. Treatment involved a double mastectomy and chemotherapy.

“Being a single mother during all of this was hard on top of having had a very challenging pregnancy,” says Nicole. “My son is my number one priority and motivation in this world. He helped get me through some of my hardest times. My family and closest friends are a huge part of getting me through my journey.

They put so much love and support into helping me and my son. I had an amazing team of doctors! I always said, ‘It could be worse.’ I tried to stay as positive as I could through everything and tackle it head on.”

Nicole chose to join Making Strides to get more involved in the breast cancer community and help advocate for and inspire others. She recommends that people listen to their bodies and advocate for their health.