



by Lanette McLamb-Veres

Headaches, meds, fatigue, frequent doctor visits, referrals... over a period of about six months. Then a referral to a Neurologist and MRI ordered the same day. The test was completed I was called at work and told "YOU HAVE A LARGE MASS on the right side of your brain." My thoughts, "Oh no! Dear God, who will care for my

babies?" My beautiful children, Kellie and Miles, were 7 and 8 at that time.

This occurred in August of 1998 and the only knowledge I had of brain tumors was that my grandma, Iris Kirk, fell victim 6 years prior to a GBM (Glioblastoma Multiforme).

My first craniotomy determined the type of tumor I had. The tumor was an ANAPLASTIC OLIGODENDROGLIOMA (yes, it is a tongue twister) and it was the size of a baseball. The second craniotomy was 4 months later. My third and fourth craniotomies were in December 2002 and they were to eliminate seizures by removing the right side hippocampus and a partial temporalobectomy (tip of the right temporal lobe).

Oh I had it all under control, so I thought. I had everything organized. Don't we all? I had greeting cards for all my friends and family that would attending/waiting at the hospital during my surgery. There were cards addressed to the group read each hour helping to break the tension. You see, I knew what everyone was feeling because I had been there with grandma 6 years prior, but prayed mine would be survivable. I even had food brought in because I knew no one would want to leave.

Before being informed of my diagnosis I was a Financial Relationship Banker and was top ranking in this state. I was a single mom earning a good salary. While being faced with surgery or long hospital stays I did not say to myself, "Oh gosh I have to have my brain heal FAST! I need to be back at work!" I knew I was going to be used in a mighty way and it was going to be a long haul. However, I never knew it would be 4 surgeries later and now I am an Advocate for tumor patients, survivors, families and loved ones.

I'm also trained as a Grief Counselor and Volunteer Chaplain. I did lose the ability to do some things which is frustrating, and things I can never regain or be retrained on, but seek to help those who are not doing as well as I am.

Throughout my journey, I have had the pleasure of meeting a beautiful person. She is my friendshine, my lovely friendshine, Christina Price. Christina made me happy from the very 1st day we met.

She suffered a Glioblastoma Multiforme tumor on the left side of her brain, her left angel wing was broken. The tumor I had was on the right side of my brain, my right angel wing was broken. Together we make a set of wings and help each other fly. We are The "Braingls." We participate together in walk-a-thons every year and support one another.

Christina is such a beautiful person. Her last name is Price, but to me she is Priceless. I've watched her endure some of the same things I have been through and I feel such sorrow for her affliction. I empathize with her as being a mom becomes even more challenging when forced to endure this horrible illness. She continues to struggle as she is wheelchair-bound due to excessive necrosis. Nonetheless, she continues to smile. I will forever treasure our special friendship and continue to pray for her healing.



The "Braingls" Christina Price with Lanette

Recently, I was asked to be an Ambassador for the American Cancer Society's "One Voice Against Cancer." The American Cancer Society along with 35 other health organizations joined in Washington DC in the summer of 2006 as part of a unified call for increased funding for cancer research.

I have attended many conferences, assist in support groups and help bring awareness locally. I raise funds, visit with victims and their families, send out greeting cards, attend brain tumor walkathons, Ride-for-Kids®,

and co-chaired for the 2006 Angel Adventure Walk. I also make and hand out gray ribbons to bring awareness to our cause. I have also visited Capitol Hill myself to distribute a copy of my personal story, because I am about support not statistics.



My biggest supporters, husband Michael and children Miles & Kellie



My Dear Grandma, Iris Kirk

As if that weren't enough, I was diagnosed again with another brain tumor on August 5, 2003. This tumor was small in comparison to the first one, but it was inoperable. I underwent radiation therapy and recently completed a two-year round of chemotherapy. By another wondrous miracle of God, and continuous support and prayers by my loved ones, the tumor has disappeared. This just gave me more motivation for bringing awareness to the general public and Congress.

Lastly, I do speak regularly at functions directed to promote survival and helping others to live not give up and how to cope.

Many can't believe that the hole in my brain scan actually was a tumor. I catch a lot of attention. I have taken my disability and tried to help others because this disease will not get the best of me, which is my love for others and desire to bless others.

***Just remember without our brain it doesn't matter.
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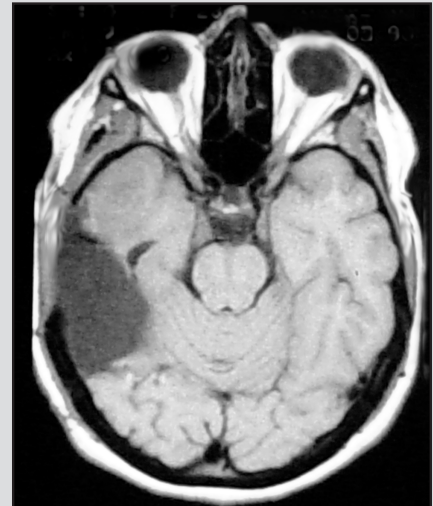
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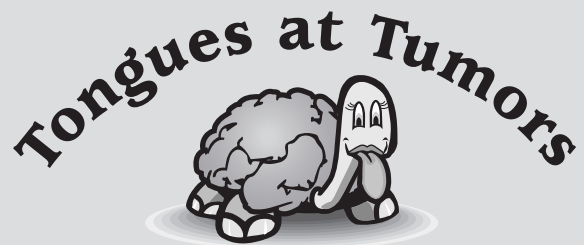
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My brain scan Post-Removal



Tongues at Tumors is a fun way to say, "tumors stink and this is what we think of them!"