An archeologist and attorney, Helene Parker’s resume reflects her sense of adventure. Her husband is a police officer and she has two active children — being ready for anything is a way of life. But a breast cancer diagnosis stopped her in her tracks.

Helene explains, “I was a deer in the headlights, which is a very odd feeling. You have no control of your life. Of course, we really never do but until you hear the ‘C’ word you just don’t know it; before then you have no idea what “no control” actually means.”

Reviewing the materials and brochures provided by her doctor’s office, Helene contacted ABCD early in her breast cancer journey. She knew that she needed to speak with someone who would understand all the emotions that she was confronting in addition to the medical considerations.

Her mentor, Amy Kielma, agrees. “I remember learning I had breast cancer like it was yesterday and how that feels. ABCD was just in its infancy; it didn’t formally exist yet. But Melodie Wilson had openly spoken about her breast cancer when she was a newscaster. So, I just called her and she invited me to have coffee.”

Amy then committed to being part of ABCD and helped to build it going forward. Now an experienced mentor, she describes how “humbling it is to acknowledge that there is no way I could get through this on my own.”

Helene remembers their first phone call clearly. “Amy told me we could speak as long as I needed and she shared some of her own journey so that I would understand that there was hope and life after breast cancer diagnosis.”

And there was plenty to talk about. Helene needed several months of bed rest due to complications and her youngest child was quite stressed to see his mother bald. Both mothers, Helene and Amy could talk comfortably about how to comfort children while still taking care of themselves.

Helene is ready to begin professional adventures again and is planning to return to work soon. She notes, “it is a cliché but it is true: so much of life is consumed with problems that are actually silly. But you don’t truly appreciate that until life really challenges you — like breast cancer does.”

Amy agrees. “So much happened this year with family and friends but because of my breast cancer and years of mentoring others through ABCD, I can transfer what I’ve learned to every day life.” Helen credits ABCD’s commitment to one-to-one support as a powerful ingredient in her journey. “Because of the one-to-one approach, ABCD listened carefully when I asked for a mentor who was a woman of strong faith,” Helene observes. “Treatment can be a lonely time because no one can do it for you. ABCD listened to my needs as a whole person and matched me with someone who understood completely. My mentor’s help got me to the other side of breast cancer.”

ABCD provides free, personalized support for those affected by breast cancer.

“ABCD listened to my needs as a whole person and matched me with someone who understood completely.”

Helene Parker

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