Stephanie Motz enjoys a moment with husband Chad and sons Joseph (left) and William during a Breakfast with Santa event at Pamlico Jack’s in December.

By Mary Pat Thompson  Co-Editor-in-Chief

Stephanie Motz was lacing her shoes, getting ready to go rock climbing, when the words came to her. Not wanting to forget, she pulled out her iPhone and typed a narrative into her Notes app:

"Why should a little cancer here and there change what makes us happy?"

Motz wrote. “It doesn’t. It won’t. As long as I’m able to do the things I enjoy.”

Powerful and heart-wrenching, the message came from years of hardship and suffering that now are used for inspiration and motivation.

NOV. 4, 2011

“That was a day to remember. That day marked a different life for me,” Motz said. The science teacher’s life may have been forever changed that dreadful day, but her story began a few months earlier.

“I was having a lot of headaches. Every single day normally, taking care of our babies, exercising, paying the bills, cleaning, the stereotypical part. I am not weak, vomiting, or lying in pain. I go about my business as usual, controlled with surgeries, radiation, and, in some cases, medicine. Of course, I have some pain, but most of the time it is manageable.

Why am I explaining all of this? If you knew me and my husband at all you would know that we do not rest on our laurels. We move...we run, Crucify, bike, climb, sail, hike, etc. Planning adventures and activities helps our release. After this, it was time to rest. I will not hold back. I will not wait until things ‘get better.’ Only then will I completely enjoy the moment.”

APRIL 10, 2015

Motz is living in Durham – a week into treatment for the six tumors found on her spine. Instead of just sitting around, she is about to go rock climbing. The narrative came. She wrote the words for her, not knowing that by expressing her feelings that night, many others might be impacted.

“Sick,” by definition, means ‘afflicted with ill health or disease; ailing.’ However, this simple word can be perceived in many different ways. There is mental sickness, emotional sickness, and, of course, physical sickness. It is a small word with a wide variety of meanings.

I fall quite nicely into this category of ‘sick’ even though I may not look the stereotypical part. I am not weak, vomiting, or lying in pain. I go about my business as usual, controlled with surgeries, radiation, and, in some cases, medicine. Of course, I have some pain, but most of the time it is manageable.

Why am I explaining all of this? If you knew me and my husband at all you would know that we do not rest on our laurels. We move...we run, Crucify, bike, climb, sail, hike, etc. Planning adventures and activities helps our release. After this, it was time to rest. I will not hold back. I will not wait until things ‘get better.’ Only then will I completely enjoy the moment.”

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