

# Teal Talk



*Happy New Year! We hope that you had a wonderful holiday season full of love and laughter with family and friends.*

*2020 started off with incredible momentum and promise, and then the world stopped. Through all of the challenges the year had for OCAO, we carried on as best we could and held 6 Survivor events and 7 fundraisers. We attended 2 education/awareness events and held the Strides for Hope virtually. Through the help of some courageous Survivors & their families willing to share their experiences, we had a video produced to use in future education/awareness outreach. We were also proud to announce the implementation of the Financial Aid Program to assist Survivors while in treatment.*

*As we look into the year ahead, it is our resolution to continue to grow this community, spread awareness & education, and to support Survivors and their families.*

*Thank you so much for all of your support and participation in 2020. You are the reason that we keep moving forward. We can't wait to see you in 2021!*



January 2021

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# IN THE NEWS

## **Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance (OCRA) Posts 2020 National Conference Videos to Their Website**

The OCRA National Conference was held virtually this fall. If you want to learn what is new in ovarian cancer research and care, this is the place to find answers. Experts in the field presented on a wide range of topics. You can find the videos by going to <https://ocrahope.org/2020/10/ovarian-cancer-videos>. There you will find the following discussions:

- Addressing Health Disparities Through Advocacy
- Advanced Care Planning
- All About PARPs and Maintenance Therapy
- Ask the Experts About Ovarian Cancer
- Balancing Work & Cancer
- Clinical Trials 101 (Q & A)
- Facing Cancer as a Young Woman
- Future of Ovarian Cancer Clinical Trials: Lessons Learned from the Covid-19 Experience
- Genetic Testing, Counseling & What the MAGENTA Trial Means for You
- How to Talk About Genetic Testing & Precision Oncology (and Why it's So Confusing)
- Immunotherapy for Ovarian Cancer
- Impact of the Pandemic on Quality of Life on Patients with Ovarian Cancer
- Improving Ovarian Cancer Risk Prediction: The Ovarian Cancer Assn Consortium
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- Navigating Financial Fallout from Cancer
- Newly Diagnosed: Ovarian Cancer 101
- Racial Disparities in Ovarian Cancer
- Rare Ovarian Cancers
- Sexuality and Intimacy After Cancer
- What's New in Ovarian Cancer Research and Treatment

# Survivor Spotlight

*Meet Candace Stewart - 8 year Survivor*



November 28, 2012- I had a “routine” hysterectomy. I was not worried about the procedure at all due to having a biopsy in August that determined my left ovary was just enlarged and twisted. There was no cancer noted. So, the plan was to have the procedure and to leave me with my right ovary so that I wouldn't go into a para-menopausal state. I mean, I was only 43 years old. I was approaching my first wedding anniversary with the love of my life (second time around at this marriage thing). After the surgery, my doctor came to my room and showed me the picture of my “bad” ovary. It looked like a head inside the ovary but it was just tissue engorged with deep dark blood. I was in the hospital for two more nights and told to stay on bed rest until my follow up on December 6th. I was taking things slowly. My husband and my children from my previous marriage were doing the best they could to make me comfortable. I was just happy to be home.

As I laid in our bed, propped up on about four pillows, and my husband laid his head across my ankles, we were watching television. My daughter, 17 years old at the time, brought me the phone, as my gynecologist was calling. I thought she was just checking on me because she was that type of physician. “Candace, I did not want to wait until you came in on Thursday. I received the pathologist report from your procedure. You have endometrioid carcinoma. The pathologist didn't like the look of the ovary we removed which ruptured a little as we took it out.” “WAIT WHAT??? Can you repeat that please?” I then got out of bed and closed my bedroom door in the face of my daughter who was saying, “What's wrong mommy?” My husband was saying, “what, why is she calling what's up?” I turned to face my husband as tears welled up in my eyes. I then said, “Are you telling me I have cancer??...How is that? You took a biopsy in August and said there was nothing I needed to worry about! How does this happen?” At this point my husband is on his feet and my daughter is knocking on the door. Her 14-year old brother is now outside my door with her, trying to get inside to find out what was happening.

I did get that second opinion. This doctor gave the same advice, but his personality and my husband's did not gel, so he wasn't the one for us. I was scheduled to have my first chemotherapy the day before my one-year wedding anniversary, which was my husband's birthday. Funny I've always thought it was on my actual anniversary. I still do because that just rings out to me as the actual date. Because my husband had just found work, I had to go to the appointment by myself. I had no family in the area we lived. I checked in and it seemed like a corporate office but when the nurse took me to the back I saw the typical examination offices.

Okay, so this was a real medical center. She took me to a waiting area after taking my vitals and told me to have a seat, the infusion team would be with me shortly. As I sat there, across from me was a female and a male who both looked tired. The female had a mask over her mouth and a fisherman's cap on her head with a windbreaker jacket a buttoned-down shirt and a denim skirt. Everything was too big for her. I was a little fearful of her because her eyes looked so empty. I smiled at her and her eyes never changed nor did she say anything. About ten minutes went by and another person was escorted to this waiting/holding area. She was wearing a denim jacket and pants set with a pink, yellow and blue tie-dye shirt; her hair, what was left of it, was red and she was wearing light - almost clear pink lip color. This woman looked strong and healthy and happy. I was thinking to myself she must be here for someone, though her hair is thin it could be that it's just fallen out due to age. This tie-dye shirt wearing lady sat next to me with her bag full of knitting needles, yarn and magazines and began to immediately lift the air in the space..."Hi Sweetie, is this your first time?" she says to me. "Yes, Ma'am," I reply. "Are you here alone? If so, it's okay I'm solo too. I make this two, almost three, hour drive by myself." I told her I was alone due to having no family in the area and only having been confirmed diagnosed with ovarian cancer and my husband not being able to leave work due to it being a new job. She asked if I had any questions and of course my concern was what exactly will happen. I was nervous and scared about her response. The lady that sat across from me with the man finally speaks and she says..."They stick you with a needle, pump you full of poison and send you home." Now that shook me to my core and I got that much more scared. Ms. Tye-Dye said to me in response, "She is absolutely correct they do stick with a needle and the chemo is a poison, but then how else will they kill the cancer? Do you read? Get yourself a good book or if you have a tablet watch a movie. Now, because they don't want you to have a negative reaction to the chemo you'll be given some Benadryl, which will make you sleepy, so don't expect to actually get through the whole book or the movie.

You just sit back and relax and let the chemo kill that cancer!! The staff here are wonderful and will get you everything you need to be comfortable”. I then felt a great relief and made a decision at that point to approach this cancer mess with the same vim and vigor as Ms. Tye-Dye, who I actually refer to as JOY, and not like the empty eyes lady, who I refer to as DEATH because she was already dead inside and reflected it outside. So, now I try to live each and every day, open to whatever newness comes my way, and to be a person that people do not feel pity for having been diagnosed with this disease.

I have had two recurrences since that 2012 diagnosis, and each time I knew that the cancer had returned...no one believed me but I knew. I've had another tumor removed, my intestine redacted and 10 rounds of radiation for spots on my liver in 2015. I had seven rounds of chemo in 2017, which had to be given to me while I stayed in ICU overnight so that they could monitor me...go figure I am allergic to the medicine that helps me. In May of 2018 I was started on daily Zejula, as a “maintenance” therapy, So far so good-- my CA125 has been under 10 since I started and unlike others I am not able to be in the “normal” range of 0 – 36 as when I was first diagnosed my CA125 was a 32. I used to believe that if I was not less than 5 with my CA125 numbers there was an issue. But now I just think that with the support of my faith, family, friends, physicians and this wonderful medication I will live to be 150 despite what my original oncologist said...THIS PATIENT WILL NOT SUCCUMB TO THE CANCER!!

~ Candace Renee Stewart, The Conqueror!



# Appetizers

## Spinach Dip Bites

6 oz. Artichoke Hearts  
2 cups Spinach, frozen  
¾ cup Mozzarella Cheese  
½ tsp Garlic Salt  
1 can Seamless Crescent Dough

½ tsp Garlic  
4 oz. Cream Cheese  
2 Tbsp Parmesan Cheese, grated  
Pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 375° In bowl, combine spinach, artichoke hearts, garlic & parmesan cheese. Blend in cream cheese & half of mozzarella cheese. Season with salt & pepper. Set aside. Using a rolling pin, lay out dough on cutting board & gently stretch to 8x12. Cut dough into 2" squares. You will have 24. Lightly grease a mini muffin tin, place a square in each cup, gently pushing down to make an indent (no need to mold to cup) Spoon & push 1 tsp spinach mixture on each square (bites will mold to cup while cooking) Sprinkle rest of mozzarella on each cup. Bake 15-17 minutes, until golden brown. Let cool 5-10 minutes before removing from tin.



## Soft Pretzel Bites

2 cups milk  
6 Tbsp Brown Sugar  
5 to 5 ½ cups Flour  
1/3 cup Baking Soda  
Coarse Salt

2 pkg Dry, Active Yeast  
4 Tbsp Butter, melted  
2 tsp Salt  
3 cups Water, warm  
8 Tbsp Butter, melted

Warm milk in microwave 1 minute. Stir in yeast & 1 Tbsp brown sugar. Let sit 10 minutes Pour in large bowl or stand mixer bowl. Add 4 Tbsp butter & rest of brown sugar. Add flour 1 cup at a time & then the fine salt. Knead about 10 minutes by hand or mixer. Put dough in greased bowl & cover with greased cling wrap. Let rise 1 hour in moist, warm place until double size. Preheat oven to 450° Punch down dough & cut into 12-14 lumps. Roll each piece to form thin rope. Combine warm water & baking soda in wide bowl. Cut dough into 1 ½ inch pieces, dip into soda water. Place on greased baking sheet, sprinkle with coarse salt. Bake 6-10 minutes, until browned. Dip baked pretzels in melted butter, while hot.

# 2020 Holiday Recipe Swap



This recipe was submitted by Survivor, Linda Piche

## Pistachio Cake

### *Cake:*

1 box Yellow or white cake mix	3 Eggs
1 (3.4 oz) Box instant pistachio pudding	1 cup Oil
1 cup Milk	Green food coloring (optional)

### *Frosting:*

1 (3.4 oz) box instant pistachio pudding	1/2 cup Milk
1 (8 oz) tub COOL WHIP, thawed	Green food coloring (optional)

Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 9 x 13 baking dish with nonstick spray. In a medium bowl, combine dry cake mix with dry instant pistachio pudding. Add eggs, oil & 1 cup milk. Stir just until combined. Stir in about 6 to 8 drops green food coloring, until fully incorporated. Pour into prepared baking dish. Bake 25-30 minutes. If you insert a toothpick into the cake, it should come out clean when done. Allow cake to cool completely before making frosting.

### To make frosting:

Put instant pistachio pudding mix into mixing bowl. Add in 1/2 cup cold milk. Stir until combined. Stir in thawed whipped topping. Once again, I put in a few drops of green food coloring to really bring out that green color -- about 5 drops or so. Spread frosting onto cooled cake. Slice and serve. If you like, sprinkle with some crushed pistachios. Enjoy!

**\*\*You can also use this recipe for a bundt cake with or without the frosting**



Hand  
Crafted

# Decongestant Shower Tablets



Self-care is so important, especially during cold & flu season. This is an easy recipe for you to use at home and even give as gifts. These aromatherapy tablets are specifically formulated to open

1 cup Baking Soda  
½ cup Citric Acid  
50 drops Camphor Essential Oil  
35 drops Eucalyptus Essential Oil

¼ cup Corn Starch  
2 tsp water  
35 drops Peppermint Essential Oil  
Optional: Pearlized blue sugar sprinkles

Mix together soda, corn starch, and citric acid, then mix in the essential oils. Add the water while quickly stirring to minimize reaction. Mix in a tablespoon of sprinkles. Place 10 cupcake liners in a cupcake/muffin tin. Scoop ¼ cup of mixture and place in each liner. Press down mixture to create flat surface, paying particular attention to pushing down the sides. Set aside to dry for a few hours. Once dry and hard, remove tablets from the liners, smooth off edges, if needed and place in an airtight container such as shrink wrap packaging or covered jar.





# *Looking for a few Survivors to end the silence & speak up about ovarian cancer*

OCAO is once again teaming up with Sunny95 radio station to help spread awareness about ovarian cancer. Recordings will take place during the first quarter of 2021. Sessions will last 20 to 30 minutes. You will be given a prompt and your response will be recorded.

To register, or get more information email Kim Britt: [kbritt@ocao.org](mailto:kbritt@ocao.org)

# Ways to Give Back



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CONTINUED SUPPORT*