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Donna Dwyre & Lori Apgar have shared a lifetime of memories as sisters. Only three years apart in age, it was only natural for Donna as the "big sister" to want to shield Lori from so many things.

Not only did they experience so much as sister's do, they have been business partners for over 25 years, working with their brother Tommie in the family carpet company. Without any warning, in 1993 just days before Lori was to give birth to her daughter, Kristina, Donna was diagnosed with breast cancer. Donna still treasures a card from Lori, sent days later:

Dear Donna, No better time to tell you how happy I am that you are my sister. My daughter already knows how close we are and I cannot wait for you to be her Godmother. I love you and wish you the best for your health. Don't worry about anything, that is what family is for. All our prayers are with you. Love, Lori

Twelve years later, the tables were turned. In 2005, Lori also heard the ill-fated diagnosis. At the disappointment to everyone to be faced with this again, it was Lori's turn. As strong of a woman and young mother as she was, it was Donna who helped her to plow through the information and appointments that were sadly all too familiar. There was tremendous devastation, but no time for sorrow or self-pity as hard choices were made.

It was natural for Donna's nurturing to want to spare Lori of so much. She wanted to step in and repeat her fight of the previous twelve years. But that was not the way it was to be. Donna had to learn to be a soldier and walk at Lori's side allowing her to experience all this herself and be there to lean on.

And while this was happening, one of Lori's Doctors suggested that Donna get a baseline MRI. She did so months later only to be diagnosed again in 2005. Now the sisters were overlapping treatment, surgeries and healing and finding their way, again together.

Family and friends have never ceased to rally in their support. Both are truly blessed to have never ending strength and support from their loving and devoted husbands. And through this journey of the "Freda" girls, some words come to mind in their Survivor story:

In the face of fear we have courage. We are bold, brave and have strong vibrant spirits that our parents instilled in us. We hold compassion for so many others we have met on this journey and are inspired by them and their stories. Any uncertainty or fear we have had is turned into faith and hope in God's love for all his children.

Our "S" in Survivor is held in deep gratitude to Drs. Scoppetuolo, Schaefer, Spiro and Segna. These doctors and so many caring medical professionals have saved our lives.

We are Survivors each and every day. Thank you for honoring us.



Donna & Lori's Story is Sponsored by:

Michael & Rosemary Scoppetuolo