



## WARRIOR CAPS

BECAUSE SOME WARRIORS HAVE HAIR

My name is Kaleese and I am a 2-year breast cancer survivor. I was only 33 years old and had a 6-month-old baby boy at home. My tumor was diagnosed as Stage 1 invasive ductal carcinoma. Invasive in my case meant the tumor had already broken through the ductal wall, and it automatically told them they wanted me to have chemo. They always want to make sure they get any crazy cancer cells that chose to invade somewhere else in your body.

We stumbled upon my lump and my husband was insistent and persistent in making sure that I went to the doctor. I went to my OBGYN and she seemed certain it was nothing but referred me to Solis anyway. I had my first mammogram, but with dense breast tissue, they couldn't see much. They did a sonogram and the tech also assured me it was probably nothing, but just to be sure they wanted to do a biopsy. I scheduled the biopsy and returned for another mammogram and the biopsy. It seemed like the process took forever. They told me it would be a week or so for results and at that point, I was 98% sure it was nothing...3 different doctors had told me it was nothing. I remember being petrified when my OBGYN called me that Friday and told me it wasn't nothing. I was devastated...I didn't have time for this, I had a baby. I couldn't do this, I had a job and a husband and responsibilities. This doesn't run in my family, this really can't be happening...why me? All the thoughts, all the frustrations and all the anger.

The following Monday, my husband and I met with the surgical oncologist. He showed me the tumor and told me what needed to happen next. That same day, we met with the medical oncologist. She went over more treatment and told me what I'd be dealing with for chemo. One of the emotionally devastating things for me was when she told me "you will lose your hair". I left the doctor's office in an emotional state of shock. I was set to start chemo the following Wednesday. My husband was told about cold cap therapy, so he started researching before he told me much about it. I was desperate to do anything to keep my hair and some sort of normalcy during all of this. After a little research and calling around, I was all set to order my caps from a place way up north when I decided to do one more final Google search. When I did, I came across The Rapunzel Project website and there plain as day was a company not only based in Texas but based in Fort Worth. I immediately sent an email asking questions and if they had any availability. Lisa responded quickly and I shared my story with her. She asked questions, I asked questions and she gave me everything I needed to know for cold caps plus added information about fighting cancer. I found some comfort in knowing that she had been standing in almost my same shoes 2 years before. The

amount of support she gave me throughout my cancer battle and continues to give me in my survivorship is irreplaceable. I am grateful that God allowed me to find a way to save my hair when I was about to face some of the darkest months of my life. When my baby looked at me, he still saw his mom and I didn't have to face rejection from him. When my husband looked at me, I hadn't changed so much that he didn't recognize me. I am thankful to Warrior Caps for giving me those things by helping me keep my hair, for allowing me some semblance of normalcy and for allowing me to choose if I wanted to talk about my cancer at that moment or not.