



Survivingbreastcancer.org

Empowering Breast Cancer Survivors From Day One

For Immediate Release

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What happens when you are diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 23? You make a movie!

Breast Cancer will affect 1 in 8 women in the U.S. during their life-time. Breast cancer screenings do not typically start until a woman turns 40, and historically, when you hear of a breast cancer diagnosis, it is associated with post-menopausal women. According to the American Cancer Society, it is estimated that breast cancer will be the number 1 most diagnosed cancer among women at 30% surpassing lung (13%) and colorectal (7%) in 2019.

5% of women who are diagnosed with breast cancer are under the age of 40. Younger women have a unique set of challenges being diagnosed in their 20's and 30's. Often times, they are just starting out in their careers, getting married, and considering family planning. The last thing on young women's minds is breast cancer. While there are several campaigns that promote self-breast examination or #feelitonthefirst, no one ever thinks "this could happen to me".

Melissa was a 23 year old young woman who heard the horrific words "you have breast cancer". As many young women come to find out, there are not a lot of support systems out there specifically focused on the needs of and challenges facing pre-menopausal women navigating a breast cancer diagnosis. Losing your hair, undergoing breast surgery, and managing relationships are tough, not to mention the emotional and mental toll it takes on one's psyche. When Melissa turned 25 the cancer returned and she had a double mastectomy. But "surgeons said nothing about the possibility of the cancer spreading into other parts of my body after surgery" exclaims Melissa. At the age of 28 she was diagnosed with terminal breast cancer.

Laura Carfang, founder and executive director at Survivingbreastcancer.org, a non-profit supporting those who have been diagnosed, explains, "Cancer doesn't discriminate. It doesn't matter if you are in the best health of your life, exercising and eating well. Cancer has this sneaky tendency to live undetected and dormant in our bodies for years. We are just now learning what risk factors and biological environments "wake" them up and activate the cancer cells to grow and potentially metastasize, but more research is still needed."

Carfang had the opportunity to interview Melissa for the podcast Breast Cancer Conversations. During the emotional dialogue Carfang, sitting on the end of her seat asked, "so what did you do next, how do



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you even manage all of this?” Melissa’s eyes lit up, a roar of laughter broke the riveting suspense and she proclaimed, “We made a movie about it!”

Ginger the Movie is a film co-directed by Melissa and her husband, Jimmy Boratyn. It presents the story of a 23-year-old woman’s pretty funny, slightly sad, powerfully emotional guide to breast cancer.

Survivingbreastcancer.org teamed up with the AMC Theater in Boston’s South Bay Plaza (Edens), and Wahlburgers to present the Boston’s premiere of *Ginger the Movie*. On Monday May 6th, Boston’s South Bay was transformed, welcoming survivors, thrivers, and friends in the breast cancer community. There was laughter, sharing of stories, tears shed, but most importantly, there were smiles and empowerment emanating from cinema #4. While your oncologist may ask about blood counts, and your nurse wants to know if you have any fatigue, Survivingbreastcancer.org is there to make sure you are smiling, laughing, and celebrating live every single day!