



coolingcancer.org

Why we do it

By Drew Santos



Chemo, Radiation, Morphine, Hospice. These words were pretty foreign to me just over a year ago. In all of my 50 plus years, I had been removed from the world of Cancer, either by fate or denial. Then in 2012 after fighting cancer for a year, my Father was given six weeks to six months to live. "Do you want to take a trip Dad, anywhere in the World" I cried as we talked on the phone the day he received the word. "No Drew, I love you but need some time to get things together". "I love you too Dad. These words could not have been spoken 10 years ago as I did not have any contact with my Dad for almost 30 years. We were strangers due to a divorce and him going his way when I was around 10 years old. It wasn't until I was in my forties and married that we started a relationship because of email. Email brought us together and allowed him to come back into my life in a very slow way. A visit to his home to meet his new wife turned into weekends together and then trips to Napa, Kauai, Big Island, San Francisco, Australia and Europe to name a few. The past was discussed but never dwelt upon. We only wanted to look to the future and spend time together enjoying life and our families. We had become friends. I dare say one of my best friends. Someone I could talk to, email, call and hang out with and feel happy and comfortable. We emailed sometimes daily talking about sports, food, travel or politics. All along our relationship continued to grow where an email or phone call didn't end without an "I love you". What a blessing this was after not hearing it for thirty years. Then boom. Just when we were planning our next adventure he was given the six weeks to six months prognosis. He lasted about six weeks. I was able to visit with him on Thanksgiving and he looked great. A little weak but smiling from ear to ear. A week later Hospice was out his house setting up a bed. Morphine was administered daily. Dad was gone by Christmas and I remember him saying "I didn't think it would happen this fast". Wow...me either. Seeing my Dad's life pass before my eyes when he had so many years left changed my life. Seeing Hospice in action and the love and care they provide woke me up to what caregivers do. My life was changed and now it included cancer.

During my Fathers Cancer therapy, my Accounting Managers Mom was diagnosed with Cancer. She passed away in December 2013 leaving a family grieving. A month after saying goodbye to my Dad (George Edward Santos), I returned to work to find out that my co-workers wife, Jen Young had breast cancer. She is 40 years old. A double mastectomy was ordered and successfully completed. She is a survivor. At the same time another co-worker was diagnosed with inoperable cancer near the heart. She is undergoing therapy now. Just last week another employee's sister passed away from Cancer. She also was in her forties.

As you can see, Cancer has touched me and my loved ones in a very big way. That is why I was driven to start a non-profit organization to raise money for cancer research and awareness. I felt that life would not have meaning if I did not make an effort to give back and help find a cure for this disease. As fate would have it, I was trying to figure out "whom" to support and raise money for. Dozens of charities and Hospice came to mind. As I pondered "who", I received a brochure in the mail from the University of Hawaii Cancer Center. The Mission for Life brochure seemed to be destiny or a sign. I read the brochure from cover to cover and then announced to my employees that we would raise money for the University of Hawaii Cancer Center with a non-profit organization called coolingcancer.org. Coolingcancer is a play on the air conditioning industry which I am a part of. Coolingcancer.org now raises money for cancer and I am very proud that we do it for a local cause.

Please join our fight to find a cure for cancer and to improve the lives of those people living with this disease. Make a donation at www.coolingcancer.org.

