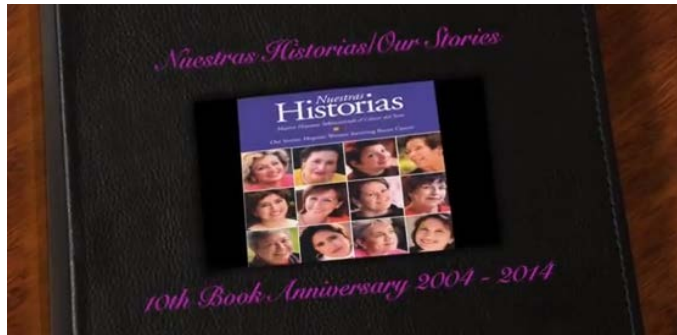


Nuestras Historias: 10 Years Later!



*Here is what some Latina cancer survivors have been up to in the last 10 years since sharing their stories in **Nuestras Historias: Mujeres Hispanas Sobreviviendo el Cáncer del Seno (Our Stories: Hispanic Women Surviving Breast Cancer)**!*

Maria Huerta

1. How would you describe your current breast health?

I'm doing great!!! Thank God. I keep up with my regular checkups, including my mammograms, and I'm blessed to say that I'm still cancer-free.

2. How did the experience of being featured in the book impact your life and your family's life?

The book *Nuestras Historias* has been wonderful and, again, I cannot say it enough, what a **true blessing** for myself, for my family and to so many people. It changed my life in a sense that it brought a special closeness for my family all over again. The experience I felt is priceless to read testimonies from other woman (my sisters for life), knowing I am not alone. I'm so honored to be part of this book. Also my children were proud of me.

3. Is there anything that you know now that you wish you had known when you were diagnosed with cancer? Why?

I wish I would have known all my options, including the knowledge on how important it is to monitor and stay updated with all new technology to monitor early signs of breast cancer. I now daily monitor myself by doing self-breast exams, which is something I did not do before. Because cancer is no joke.

4. What advice do you have for other women recently diagnosed with breast cancer?

My advice is to keep your eyes, spirit, mind, and faith on Jesus. Please, no matter how bad the circumstances may look, never, ever give up on yourself. Reach out to family and friends keep them near. If you don't have anyone, well, guess what? You are not alone or ever would be. Our Jesus Christ tells us in His word that He would never ever leave us or forsake us. Plus, you have your sisters for life who have already experienced breast cancer. I'm here reaching my hand to you with an open heart. I also want to tell them that they are beautiful and loved.

5. What accomplishments/milestones have you experienced in the past 10 years that you're proud/grateful for?

I'm grateful to be alive!!!!!! Thank you, Jesus! I'm so blessed to say I have 12 wonderful grandchildren. I'm getting married to a wonderful friend, praying partner and, a man of God whom, I love very much. My 80-year-old mother lives with me who is also a breast cancer survivor. I have accomplished purchasing my first home in 2007 and I'm proud to say it's paid in full. I work for a wonderful organization called Habitat for Humanity—proud to say 100% of funds go toward building homes for deserving families. My stumbling block would be, I lost my first-born son in the year 2011 due to a hit and run. I would go through a million times all over again of the pain and suffering with breast cancer to not to experience the pain of losing my child.

6. What does survivorship mean to you?

Survivorship is holding on to Jesus. I will continue giving God all the Glory and Honor. Taking one day a time even when you are knocked down so hard that it takes the wind out of you , remember to dust yourself off and get up to move forward.....to give thanks to God for another day, that **He** got me through.

7. What challenges, if any, do you still face as a survivor?

My challenges would now be to stay healthy, stay strong, not to fall into deep depression from losing my son and to continue having the strength to continue to care for my 80-year-old mother who lives with me. My dream and/or challenge is to also expand my home or to purchase a larger home by next year.

8. What are your hopes for the near future?

My future, my goal is to be married next year on my deceased son's birthday, this day Jan. 7, 2015, is in honor my son and to Honor God. I pray My God will use me, place me for any support needed to anyone presently going through cancer.