

Dear Friends of Juran Institute:

Let me introduce myself. My name is Nicki Pirello and I will be running the Boston Marathon this April for the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute for my future mother-in-law Monica DeFeo, Joe DeFeo's wife of 31 years. Monica has been an inspiration to all of us as she has gracefully battled metastatic breast cancer. Although Monica is doing well, snow shoeing, skiing and maintaining normal activities, stage IV cancer is a difficult disease to handle.

This is my first marathon, and as I start to increase my mileage and learn what it's like to run on ice and snow in the dark, I can't help but think that I have it easy! I have always wanted to run the marathon, and I knew if I ever got up enough courage I would only run on the Dana-Farber Team. While training to run 26.2 miles will require strength, discipline and a bit of luck, it will be nothing compared to the adversity facing Dana-Farber patients. With that in mind, I am running this marathon for my future mother-in-law, Monica DeFeo.

I met Monica, six years ago; she was doing handstands off her diving board in a sundress. When the full-grown men at the party tried to follow her example, they couldn't compare with her sheer strength, and instead belly-flopped into the pool. Her emotional strength is even more impressive. Monica has faced her breast cancer diagnosis with the most grace and courage I have ever seen. I am amazed at how she is teaching everyone around her what it means to really live. When I am on a long run and I hit a hill and think my legs are going to give out, I think about Monica and try to emulate her strength. I have included a note below from Monica that helps explain why this research is so important. My fund-raising goal is \$15,000, with the proceeds going directly to Dana-Farber's research group, specifically ear-marked for Dr. Krop's research in HER-2 Breast Cancer. The research being done at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute is groundbreaking and could be our answer! Mr. DeFeo, my future father-in-law and President of Juran Institute will match every dollar I raise. Please forward this e-mail to anyone you know! Together, we can make a difference. Please click on the link below to donate or mail a check, made out to Dana-Farber Marathon Challenge, to me c/o Juran Institute, 555 Heritage Road, Southbury, CT 06488.

Thanks for your support! Nicki Pirello

For contributions here is the link to my fundraising website:

<http://www.runDFMC.org/2011/nickip>

A note from Monica:

Breast cancer comes in many stages, forms and faces. How it will affect our lives will always remain a question. We can control some facets of the disease, but others remain in the hands that study and research this ever changing disease. Over the past 10 years, breast cancer, in my words, is treated as a very targeted disease. Each one of us faced with this disease comes with a body and system that is unique, different and ever changing. We need new methods, medication and treatments that fit our unique person. Through research, we can now begin to fit the treatment with each individual person. I am a living example of this in progress.

In 2005, I was diagnosed with a very early stage of unusual cells. Thanks to early detection and treatment, I took the most aggressive treatment to rid myself of these cells. At the time, the treatment was effective for what I was faced with. In 2008, however the cells became more aggressive and invaded my body. I was now faced with Stage 4 disease, in my lungs, bones and then brain. One can only imagine the effect this has on a person. How am I to survive and live with this? What can I do to control this disease? What is the best form of treatment to keep me alive? Where do I go and what is best for me? There are many questions and really no conclusive answers.

Through many hours of searching, I did go to Dana-Farber. With the help of my doctor, I went to a place that has doctors who research and treat their patients at the same time. They see firsthand what the patient is like and begin to know the effects of their particular cancer and its treatment. I was so impressed with their decision to treat me as an individual patient. If it was not for these types of research centers, cancer patients like me would not have new ideas and treatments that finally work.

Ten years ago, someone like me, with HER2 metastatic breast cancer would not have lived more than one year after diagnosis. Today, I live because research and new medications are tested. I truly believe Dana-Farber is a place where one can go and have hope they can survive with the help of caring research centers.

Thank you Nicki for your dedication and challenge that will show all of us that hard work and endurance will pay off and to anyone that supports other cancer patients like me.

Love Monica