



Maimah Karmo: Diagnosed with stage 2 aggressive breast cancer in 2006

Age: 34

Residence: Aldie, Virginia

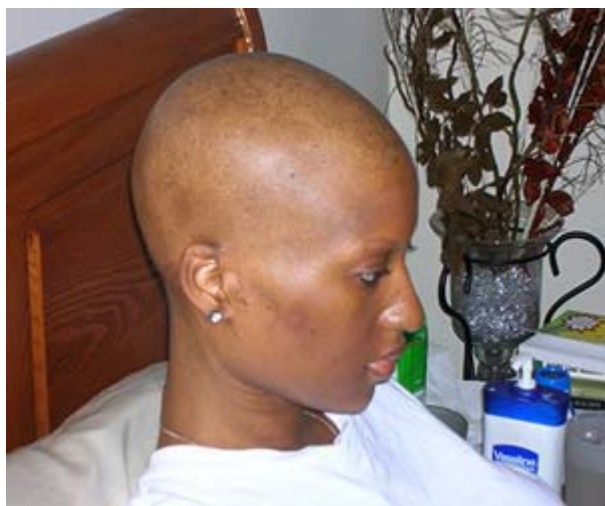
Occupation: Proposal manager for government contractor

Marital Status: Single

Children: Noelle, 5

Current Health: Cancer free since November of 2006

Best Friend: Teresa Petrini, 42



Maimah's Story

Maimah: Teresa and I met at work in 2003 but we became really good friends after I got diagnosed with aggressive stage 2 breast cancer. She was one of the first people I called...I instinctively knew she was someone who could stabilize me. She immediately started getting lists of doctors and resources. When I was diagnosed, I was so afraid that this thing was in my body and I couldn't get away from it. But she helped me see that I was in the driver's seat, not the cancer. Every time I had chemo, she would come and spend the entire day with me. She was so compassionate. She just sat there and said *You're going to be okay honey*, and she'd wipe my face with a cool cloth when I felt nauseated from chemo and hold my hand. Besides my mother, I'd never had anyone do that for me -- really be there and unconditionally love me. It's one of the reasons I created ChemoBuddy (a national program which matches volunteers to accompany patients undergoing chemotherapy to their treatments). Because of Teresa, I was able to shift out of being fearful and into celebrating life while going through cancer. She helped me think about how I could help other people.



How Teresa Helped

Teresa: When Maimah told me she had been diagnosed with breast cancer, I felt like a rock hit me. She's so young, she's a single mom. To think that cancer could possibly take her was extremely sad. In my lifetime, I have experienced a lot of people passing away from cancer and I was aware of how people treat you differently when there's something unusual about you. I wanted to be of value to Maimah, not another voice of pity. The first time we went to chemo, she was crying. But halfway to the hospital she said, "Let's talk about what I could possibly be learning from this." Together we decided to find a way to turn a negative into a positive. -- *Lisa Gerry*