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Feature: Devastating diagnosis brings summer to a halt

Added by **Katie Davert** on December 7, 2017

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by Katie Davert

Laura Davert envisioned spending the summer of 2017 playing golf and lounging at her summer home with her family. Instead, she spent it learning how to cope with a cancer diagnosis and the treatments that would follow.

It had begun two months earlier when her doctor suggested she take part in a study for smokers. Davert had a low dose CAT scan. She qualified based on her age, how long she smoked and her insurance. Not expecting to find anything, she readily agreed.

A week after the first test, in late May, her doctor called. They'd found a small spot, about the size of a pencil eraser, in her left lung. "It could be nothing, they had said. But I knew in my heart it wasn't just nothing," said Davert.

She went through three more tests over the month of June. The last one, a needle biopsy, left her immobile for three days. Nine days after the needle biopsy, on June 28th, she got a call at 8:00am, two hours before her scheduled appointment.

"The receptionist who called said she was calling to confirm my appointment on July fifth, but I never made one," said Davert. The office had called prematurely to confirm her pulmonologist's appointment. "I knew then that I had cancer. There was no other reason for the call."

Later that day, Davert went to see her doctor, who apologized for the way the news was delivered and informed her she did have stage one lung cancer. After a second biopsy, Davert made an appointment to have half of her left lung removed.

On August 18th Davert underwent surgery and spent four days post op. Doctors examined the piece of the lung they removed under a microscope and told Davert she had stage three lung cancer. "They found four more spots in the part they took out, but what about the part they didn't? It was unsettling not hearing a definite answer," said Davert. She was given the option to do chemotherapy but passed because it would only make a 5-8 percent difference and it wasn't worth the risk. The doctors couldn't tell her even after this surgery whether or not she was cancer free.

"They told me the cancer was gone, but they can't guarantee it won't come back. Not a day goes by where I'm not thinking about it."



(Photo: Laura Davert)