

Pink Ribbon Month



Cancer victim is surviving and thriving

Kennedy keeps her body and mind in shape

BY VINCE LOVATO
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CHELAN -- "Feel what your body's doing," said Lynda Kennedy in a tone barely above a whisper as a half dozen shoeless yoga students slowly stretch into a new position. The lighting is low and the faint sound of bubbling water from a mini rock pool wafts through the Yogachelan studio.

Kennedy, who teaches the class, is a woman of 56 whose physique belies her age.

She is a breast cancer survivor who escaped tragedy by getting checked regularly and simply got on with her life.

"Yoga is one way to take control of your life," she said. "My identity is not that I'm a breast cancer survivor. My identity is that I'm Lynda. That changes our approach to life."

Seven years ago a tiny lump showed up during her annual mammogram. After a biopsy and ultrasound verified the finding, a simple lumpectomy removed the cyst and more regular mammograms and self-examinations help her keep tabs on any new cancer that might start up.

"I'm a poster girl for early detection," she said. "Don't be afraid of the results. The earlier you catch it, the easier it is



Above, Lynda Kennedy performs a yoga stretch during a recent class. Right, a student seems to break into pieces in mirrors on the wall at Yogachelan.

to treat. It helps us deal with depression and the fear of the unknown."

Kennedy, who started learning yoga when she was 19, moved to Chelan four years ago and uses yoga and hobbies such as golf, hiking and camping to stay fit.

"Yoga, staying active, is important because we get familiar with our bodies; what feels normal and what feels unusual," she said. "Sometimes its hard to get (cancer survivors) to take that first step. They have to continue to move and breathe and stay healthy."

Kennedy attends Women Surviving-Thriving Cancer Support

Group meetings which focus on the psychological side of survival.

"I know my cancer can recur but I choose to believe the cancer is gone," she said. "I choose to have a positive attitude and when I do that, it usually comes back to me."

Anne Brooks, who helped found the survivor group, is inspired by her friend.

"I see her as a thriver," Brooks said. "It was an event in her life like anything that's pretty major. But she dealt with it and moved on and she's living life. Some can get really victimized by that diagnosis and they feel like they can't

live like they did before."

Kennedy's fitness and outlook affects her fellow survivors.

"I see how healthy she is and the things she does and the battles we all have in our daily lives and just how happy she is," Brooks said. "Lynda's there mostly to help support the others."

Diagnosed with breast cancer that spread to her lymph nodes five years ago, Brooks went through the rigors of surgery, and chemotherapy and hormone therapy.

The support group was meeting monthly at different places and times but Brooks hopes to



settle in at one place every month in Chelan.

She will post the new meeting schedules in *The Mirror*. Contact Brooks at 509-682-8718.

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