

Mammography...from Page 1A

Dr. Steven Efird of Union General Hospital, informed her that she had cancer.

Things started moving fast then. She opted for a double mastectomy and also found out that she had the aggressive HER2-positive breast cancer, which meant that she would be needing additional treatment following surgery.

On Wednesday, March 2, Cook underwent surgery at Union General to remove her breasts and have an injectable port put into place so that she could start chemotherapy at the end of March.

During the surgery, a pathologist with the hospital was able to get tissue from Cook's lymph nodes and make the determination that her cancer had not spread, though the chemo, which will last six months, is necessary due to the aggressive nature of the cancer.

Along with her chemotherapy, which will also be administered locally at Georgia Cancer Specialists in Blairsville, Cook will be receiving another drug



May Mayo and Pat Cook

called Herceptin for a year, a treatment meant to target HER2 gene overexpression.

"The whole point of me telling my story is that without the 3D mammogram, I would probably be dead within six months," said Cook, who added she was grateful to have so many medical services available in Blairsville. "I was not going to pay the \$75 and it saved my life. I have been posting my journey on Facebook every day, and if you would like to follow my journey, just friend request me."

Cook, who moved to Blairsville nine years ago after retiring from the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention as a program director in antibiotic resistance and infectious diseases, said that she's found a new purpose in life.

Moving forward, she plans to start an outreach program aimed at helping those suffering from cancer, and she's already begun the process by sharing her experiences on Facebook.

Per Facebook, Cook has been struggling with side effects of the chemotherapy, which she began receiving last week, and she knows that she will likely be losing her hair and feeling weak and fatigued throughout her treatment. But Cook has faith that God is and has been with her along the

way, and that everything will work out for the best.

"I now feel that the cancer is the best thing that ever happened to me," said Cook. "I have a purpose to help others with cancer and to share the love of God."

Cook urges other women to get their yearly mammograms, and to opt for the 3D procedure, despite the added cost involved, and UGH Radiology Director Anderson said that women need to start thinking about mammograms sooner rather than later in life.

"If there is any takeaway, it would be to just emphasize how important mammography is, and that early detection definitely improves outcomes," said Anderson.

Dr. Darren Mullins recently joined the staff of Georgia Cancer Specialists, and according to Cook, he's been helping to guide her through her course of treatment.

"In my individual opinion as somebody who's been treating breast cancer now for over 20 years, I think absolutely, mammograms save lives," said Dr. Mullins. "And when we catch breast cancers earlier, there's a better chance of getting rid of them completely and forever. If a 3D mammogram can help us catch a breast cancer when it's smaller, then I think that's a real advantage."

4-H...from Page 1A

"The record book is a resume of what they've done in their projects over the last 12 months. So basically, each student has a mini resume that is also judged before the district competition, and the score of the mini resume and the presentation together make the winning score."

For example, Union County High School senior Stephanie Busse's Sports Project featured a resume of her extensive experience as a high school athlete, and her presentation at competition laser-focused in on a single aspect within her project, namely an in-depth analysis of running shoes for cross country.

"There are some kids in 4-H, over the long haul, who will develop their career interest based on some of the things that they do in 4-H," said Jennings. "Not necessarily all the time, but there will be kids who start up in middle school and high school involved in the Vet Care Project, and they explore career opportunities and then guess what – by the time they go to college, they're like, well, this is what I want to do."

First place Senior 4-H'ers (ninth through 12th grade) include: Stephanie Busse in the Sports Project, senior Emma Garrison in Outdoor Recreation Project, sophomore Gabriella Jennings in Plants, Soils and Fertilizer, junior Caitlyn Murphy in Environmental Science, senior Maggie Plott in Food for Fitness, sophomore Emily Rittenhouse in Flowers, Shrubs and Lawns, and senior Sage Royston in Health.

Also, the Sweepstakes winner that will move on to State due to the large number of competitors in her project is sophomore Elena Griggs in the Target Sports Project.

All eight students will participate at State 4-H Congress in Atlanta in July. There they will again present their demonstrations and attempt to win a trip to National 4-H Congress.

Also winners in the

Fair...

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life a week of exciting rides, delicious food and fun games, providing one of the most exciting adventures this county has ever experienced.

It also makes a difference in the Union County community.

The Kiwanis Fair brings the fun-filled carnival atmosphere here, with proceeds benefitting the county's children. There are many available rides for an adventure all patrons will never forget.

There are lots of rides for the youngsters too.

Don't eat before you get there because there are ample supplies of appetizing food.

Come join the family tradition. Parking is free, and the gate admission price is a very reasonable \$2; children under 12 years old get in free.

An unlimited ride ticket is available for \$15; single ride tickets also are available.

Fair operation hours begin Tuesday – Friday 5 p.m.; Saturday at noon, and Sunday at 1 p.m.

Come on out and support the Blairsville Kiwanis Mountain Fair. You'll be glad you did.

Senior Division were: Second Place honors to senior Catey Allen in the Fashion Review Project, senior Jarrett Holbrook in Performing Arts Piano, sophomore Allie Kumler in Pork Production Project, freshman Caroline Legg in Dog Care and Training, and Third Place winner freshman Emma Hambrick in Workforce Preparation.

Other winners in the Senior Division with high scores were: junior Nick Atkinson for Science, Engineering and Mechanics, freshman Sam Cockerham in International, senior Daniel Kumler in Wildlife, freshman Reese Patterson in Outdoor Recreation, senior Matthew Penney in History, freshman Mathew Poe in Wildlife and freshman Sierra Weaver in Human Development.

In the Junior Division, seventh- and eighth-grade students who finished First Place were: seventh-grader Nolan Bachman in the Marine and Coastal Ecology Project, seventh-grader Elizabeth Cecci in Cat Care, seventh-grader Aliceyn Covington, Plants, Soils and Fertilizer, seventh-grader Jayden Harkins-Durfee in Photography, eighth-grader Jesse Holbrook in Flowers Shrubs and Lawns, eighth-grader Skylar Miller in Fruits, Vegetables and Nuts, and

seventh-grader Morgan Penney in Dog Care and Training.

Eighth-grader Ashley Palmateer placed second in the Human Development Project, and seventh-grader Sarah Steel took Third Place honors in the Health Project.

Also receiving high placement while representing Union County as County Winners were: seventh-grader Katie Baxter in Workforce Preparation, seventh-grader Danielle Grader in Health, seventh-grader Daniel Griggs in Outdoor Recreation, and seventh-grader Makayla Patton in Horse.

Past winners and Master 4-H'ers found representation in senior Brooks Patterson, college freshman Phillippe Jennings and senior Madeline Walker, who served as Teen Leaders during the weekend. Kim Holbrook and Kristy Penney, both parents, served as Volunteer Leaders during the weekend at Rock Eagle.

"Overall, this year's District Project Achievement (DPA) was a great success," said Jennings, offering special thanks to Jammie Murphy at the 4-H office for making DPA such a successful event.

For more information on Union County 4-H, contact Timothy Jennings at the County Extension Office at (706) 439-6030.